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THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES is on the warpath again. It is busy tearing to pieces both the government economy program submitted by President Hoover and that prepared by its own special economy committee. It is too early yet to see exactly what damage the House has wrought, or, indeed, to learn whether the damage is as serious as has been reported. However, we strongly disapprove the action of the House in rejecting the plan to consolidate the War and Navy departments into a Department of National Defense. This would not only have saved the government an annual expenditure of about $100,000,000, but it would have recognized the necessity of placing national armaments on a defensive basis. But on the other hand we are glad to note that the scheme to give away the government-owned Panama Railroad Steamship Line has been blocked. This company has been built up by the government until it now shows a profit in most departments. It was intended that the line should be abandoned and the profitable business turned over to private companies. It may be that the good the House finally accomplishes will outweigh the evil. In any case, it must be acknowledged that that body is acting entirely within its constitutional rights. *The Nation* was among the first to demand economy in government after the depression began. It still insists that expenditures must be drastically reduced and extravagance entirely eliminated, but this task must be undertaken in accordance with normal democratic procedure.

IMPRESSIVE as were Al Smith's victory in the Democratic primary in Massachusetts and his run in the Pennsylvania contest, they do not seem to warrant the general verdict that the candidacy of Governor Roosevelt has been stopped. Even though the anti-Roosevelt forces win in the California primary, the results of which will be known before these lines appear, Roosevelt will still go into the Chicago convention with a huge block of pledged votes, perhaps with a commanding majority of the delegates. Such is the temper of State Democratic leaders everywhere—the men whose local machines really keep the national party alive—that they are prepared to accept Roosevelt, whether or not they actually want him, rather than risk a long fight to break down his strength in the convention. On the other hand, Roosevelt, poorly advised as usual, may in the end defeat himself. The proposal of his managers that the two-thirds rule be abolished in the coming convention indicates a fear that Roosevelt has now reached the maximum of his strength, and such wavering before the Smith faction will only encourage the enemy. Again, in testifying in court in behalf of his State Superintendent of Banks, Joseph A. Broderick, who is being tried in connection with the failure of the Bank of United States, the Governor risked a serious political setback. Obviously, he wanted to strengthen Broderick's case in the hope of preventing a conviction that would reflect upon himself. But at the same time he has now so closely identified himself with this appointee that a conviction may prove doubly injurious.

THE COMMENTS FROM WASHINGTON when the verdict of manslaughter in the Massie case became known were nothing less than impertinent. Senator Jim Ham Lewis came through with the statesmanlike remark that the President should at once start an investigation and, if the facts as given in the newspapers are true, should pardon the four defendants at once. Senator McKellar of Tennessee demanded the impeachment of Judge Albert M. Cristy, who presided over the grand jury which brought the indictment, on the ground that the indictment was brought under compulsion by the judge. Representative Rankin of Mississippi urged federal control of Hawaii until "mockeries of justice" are ended. Senator Robinson of Indiana, with exquisite logic, said: "If I had been on the jury, I would have freed them. I think the whole question of administration of law in Hawaii requires a thorough investigation by Congress. There has been a deplorable let-down in the standards of justice and this case is an evidence of it." Senator Copeland declared: "It is distressing beyond words that so cruel a verdict could be rendered in an American possession. . . . I join with every other straight-thinking citizen in the conviction that something is wrong in Hawaii." Finally Representative Crisp of Georgia, where white womanhood is protected at all costs, has introduced a bill in the House which would pardon by Congressional act all four defendants. The fact that the four Americans were convicted in what gave every appearance of a fair trial, that there is no doubt of the guilt of one of them and the aid of the

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other three seems to have been overlooked by these estimable legislators. The whole case, from every aspect, is deplorable; but never more so than in these irresponsible proposals from those whose profession is to make and whose first care should be to observe our laws.

EVEN A PUBLIC made callous by daily confessions of political corruption will hardly read without a shock the revelations by Representative La Guardia of the acceptance, by financial writers on some of the most reputable New York newspapers, of virtual bribes from stock manipulators. Comparisons with Europe are not too often in our favor, but we had at least got into the habit of congratulating ourselves on the comparative ethical level of the American press. It is important, however, that whatever indignation Mr. La Guardia's exposures arouse should not fall alone on the stock manipulators and financial writers immediately concerned. The transactions are merely symptomatic of the widespread moral laxity in the whole business of security distribution, and they are by no means the most important symptoms. It may be well to remind ourselves, also, that the kind of laxity exposed is not confined either to politics or to Wall Street. When a celebrity indorses a cold cream or a cigarette in exchange for a thousand dollars or so, he or she is doing something as essentially dishonest in principle as the New York financial writers who took a cut of the "underwriting profits" while they printed a little favorable news about the stocks involved. The cigarette indorser may feel that the thing he is boosting is not without merit and that his boosting-for-pay is at least harmless. Most of the financial writers were probably of the same opinion regarding their own action.

WE CANNOT RESIST a word of praise for the new Secretary of the Treasury, Ogden Mills, without meaning thereby to indorse the positions that he takes, or to overlook the fact that, like a thoroughgoing politician, he constantly changes his position and gives no guaranty that what he believes in January he will believe in March. None the less, it is a delight to read his speeches. They are singularly free from the usual politician's platitudes. They are straightforward, full of meat, clear, and presented in excellent form. He is especially good in his delivery. Indeed, when on his feet, he challenges comparison with some of the best of the foreign statesmen. He has not the reputation of being quite as eloquent as the Secretary of War, Colonel Hurley, but we know that the Colonel's brilliant Hibernian speeches have been written for him by an army officer with an outstanding Hebraic name, thus proving that Irish wit is not necessarily a monopoly of natives of Erin. Plainly, however, Colonel Hurley has been picked to be the chief defender of the Hoover Administration in the coming campaign. Why not? He assured the newspaper publishers in their annual convention in New York that Hoover was quite as great as Abraham Lincoln, and that he was the only living man who had made a constructive move in dealing with the world crisis.

WE KNOW, as does Secretary Hurley, that the campaign is now but a few months off and that there is great need of dressing Herbert Hoover in patriotic robes for the sake of a Republican victory. But we strongly object to the light-hearted manner in which Mr. Hurley has been dipping into the government treasury, into the taxes collected from the sorely pressed citizens of the country, in his efforts to accomplish that purpose. The Secretary of War has been using a government airplane piloted by an army air-corps officer in stumping the country for Herbert Hoover. This is a highly improper, if not wholly illegal, use of government funds. It must be condemned in the strongest terms. The practice is doubly unethical in coming just at the time when the Hoover Administration is raising such a pother about government economy.

LORD IRWIN, VICEROY OF INDIA for the five years ending in 1931, has earned the right to be heard with respect. Mahatma Gandhi, in his first public address in London last fall, spoke of him feelingly as "that great man." Before a Toronto audience, Lord Irwin on April 27 deplored Gandhi's failure to cooperate and favored an all-India federation "within the polity of the British Commonwealth, no longer on terms of subordination, but on a mutually accepted footing of equal partnership." Meantime on the very same day, the present Viceroy, Lord Willingdon, gave an interview to the Associated Press in which he manifested hope of a successful constitution, hinted that the repressive ordinances might be renewed when they expire four months from now, and declared that Gandhi, "if penitent," could make approaches to the Government. Lord Irwin, as might be expected, is at once the more realistic and conciliatory of the two. But even he seems to have forgotten that it was the present Viceroy, egged on by Tory diehards, who refused to confer with Gandhi and precipitated the present break. All talk about "equal partnership" is futile or worse when all that is offered to India in the name of autonomy is a government that is British at the center, with the British-controlled army, intolerably burdensome, fastened upon the country from without.

CERTAIN OFFICIALS IN INDIA, happily, find it their duty to tell the truth rather than voice fantastic optimism. T. M. Ainscough, senior trade commissioner in India and Ceylon, has said in a recent government report:

> The phenomenal reduction by over one-third in the volume of India's imports may be attributed to two main factors: firstly, the heavy fall in the purchasing power of the Indian consumer as a result of the drop in the prices obtainable for his produce; and, secondly, the political movement, involving both the boycott of United Kingdom goods, and the closing of certain markets for lengthy periods, violent picketing, and a general state of disturbance entailing severe losses to traders and wide lack of confidence.

Imports of cotton cloth from the United Kingdom, for example, amounted in 1929 to some 280,000,000 yards; in 1930 the figure dropped to 142,300,000 yards; and in 1931 it had plunged downward to 60,000,000. Yarn imported from all countries in 1929 totaled about 27,900,000 pounds; in two years it went down to 18,700,000 pounds. But in this same time yarn imports from the United Kingdom alone fell strikingly faster, from 10,300,000 to 4,700,000 pounds. Mr. Ainscough, pointing out that in a single year the United Kingdom's share of the total import trade had dropped from 42.8 per cent to 37.2 per cent, considers this loss "so abnormal that it can only be accounted for by the boycott of

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United Kingdom goods and their partial replacement by the products of other countries." Later figures covering the early months of 1932 show the same downward trend. Textiles, while hit worst of all, are by no means the only goods affected; the list of articles which the Indian masses refuse to buy has been steadily growing.

MATTHEW WOLL, the most reactionary of our labor leaders, has again come forward with a proposal to suppress radicalism in the United States. He has written the members of the judiciary committees of the Senate and House asking them to support pending legislation empowering the Department of Justice to "deal adequately" with the Communists. The letter contains a list of forest and oil-well fires, bombings, destruction and looting of buildings and banks, and other "outrages," reported from various sections of the country. The list of these incidents was compiled by the National Civic Federation under the direction of the chairman of its executive committee, Ralph M. Easley. One would suppose that the radicals had launched a reign of terror. But Mr. Woll does not make this accusation. "It is not contended," his letter declares, "that any or all of these outrages are the direct result of Communist or other subversive activity." In other words, he has no proof, but has to weave his case out of insinuation and suspicion. He endeavors to paint the radicals as terrorists at the same time that he seeks to escape responsibility for his unsupported charges. Quite apart from the hollowness of the Woll-Easley case, it should be apparent that any attempt to suppress the Communist movement would only drive it underground, where, as history so clearly shows, it would thrive as never before.

WHERE IS THE RADICALISM in the colleges of which we have been hearing so much? A poll of college newspaper editors taken by the Columbia University *Spectator* reveals only slight traces of a turn to the left. Almost half the editors—41 out of 102—favored the election of Herbert Hoover, who received more votes than any other candidate. In second place was Franklin D. Roosevelt with 15 votes, while Newton D. Baker came third with 12. True, a radical turn of mind was expressed in the 11 votes that put Norman Thomas in fourth place, but there has long been a small minority of Socialists among college students. The remaining 23 votes were scattered among 11 minor candidates in the two conservative parties. On the question of whether they favored the renomination of President Hoover by the Republican Party, 69 editors voted yes, and only 37 voted no. Fifty-seven editors thought Hoover would be reelected; 20 predicted victory for Roosevelt; 11 picked "any Democrat" to win; and 1 expressed the opinion that "anyone but Hoover" would win. According to the returns published by the *Spectator*, a majority of the editors did not even bother to answer the questions dealing with political and economic issues. Thus only 1 vote was cast for recognition of Russia, and none against; 18 for reduction of the tariff, and 2 against; 8 for cancelation of the war debts, and 3 against; 5 for social insurance, and none against. Personalities seem to appeal more strongly to the college youth of today than abstract but important political and economic questions. In this, however, the student editors differ little from the general run of American citizens.

THE REVEREND CHARLES LUTWIDGE DODGSON would probably hold up his fastidious hands in holy horror at the to-do that is being made over the visit of his "ideal child friend," Mrs. Alice Hargreaves, to the land of unintermittent ballyhoo. Alice, always young between the covers of Lewis Carroll's book, is now close on to eighty. But the irrepressible publicity boys have her met down New York Bay by a flock of interviewers who ask her what she thinks of the Manhattan sky line, they arrange that she broadcast over a national hook-up, they will doubtless subject her to every publicity device they are permitted in an effort to make the Lewis Carroll celebration "go over big." If this induces Mrs. Hargreaves to believe that the modern Wonderland into which she has come as a thrice-welcomed visitor is even stranger than the lands down the rabbit hole, one cannot blame her. But, in the United States, when we celebrate, *we celebrate!* There is here, as in every English-speaking country and most of the other countries, a secure place labeled "Alice" which will never be empty. There is besides a very considerable amount of friendly interest in Alice in the flesh, and certainly no end of welcome for her when she comes to visit. But it is our custom to express our friendly interest and our welcome in whoop-la. All together, boys, whoop-la for Lewis Carroll, world-famous inventor of Wonderland; whoop-la for Alice, eighty-year-old "child friend," whoop-la for the Lewis Carroll celebration, sponsored by Columbia University and broadcast over WPDQ. Whoop-la for the United States of America, where whoop-la originated and where most profusely and tirelessly it flows.

OUR FAVORITE PLAYWRIGHT has at last been dignified by a Pulitzer prize for the drama. This is George S. Kaufman, who with his collaborator, Morrie Ryskind, wins the prize for "Of Thee I Sing." This astonishing perspicacity on the part of the Pulitzer prize committee—to whom somebody must have whispered that a comedy could be a drama, too—runs through most of the awards for 1931, which are considerably above the average in taste and common sense. Walter Duranty of the New York *Times*, whose Russian dispatches have long been a model of interest, information, and sound judgment, receives the award for correspondence, and divides it with another excellent journalist, Charles G. Ross, of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, who is honored for his article The Country's Plight—What Can Be Done About It? The Indianapolis *News* is distinguished for its campaign to eliminate waste in local government. Pearl Buck for "The Good Earth" is honored with the novel award, and a continuous record of best-selling accompanied by the most flattering encomiums from our leading critics will testify that she deserves it. The prize for the best history of the year goes to General Pershing, for "My Experiences in the World War"; the best biography is adjudged to be Henry F. Pringle's "Theodore Roosevelt"; the prize poem is George Dillon's "The Flowering Stone." These awards will be received with varying degrees of appreciation and agreement. But about "Of Thee I Sing," which is chosen as the play which "shall best represent the educational value and power of the stage," there will be none to quarrel—with the honorable exception of Mr. Robert C. Benchley who, like Queen Victoria, was not amused.

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Inflation—Blessing or Catastrophe?

AS the economic crisis drags on and shows no signs of betterment; as wholesale commodity prices, which have already fallen to the levels of 1899 after the greatest collapse witnessed in a century, continue to sag; as the country's premier corporation passes its dividend for the first time in seventeen years and fails not only to earn interest on its bonds but even to meet the cost of operating at one-quarter of its capacity; as the country's railroads continue to report their weary string of deficits; as stocks and bonds sink daily to new low levels; as farmers find the prices of their fruit and grain so low that the fruit is not worth picking nor the grain worth planting, while the farm is unsalable and shrunken in value to less than the amount of its first mortgage; as millions of men and women, including one out of every three factory workers employed three years ago, find themselves out of jobs, while hundreds of thousands of them are hungry and desperate, it is not surprising that men's thoughts should be turning more and more to plans of monetary inflation. The demand for inflation is always raised in every great crisis. It was raised in 1873. The issue had to be fought out in a Presidential campaign in 1896. And it can at least be said that if the demand for inflation is ever justified, it is more justified now than it has been at any other time in our history as a nation.

Would monetary inflation prove a cure for our troubles? Or would it make them infinitely worse? Would it turn the tide, or would it mean the final plunge to catastrophe? The answer is not as simple as it may appear either to the passionate advocates of inflation or to its contemptuous opponents. The effect would depend largely, to begin with, on what kind of inflation we should undertake. Let us look at some of the recent plans either proposed or in operation. The most important of these, if only because it is already in effect, is the policy of the Federal Reserve banks, upon which we commented last week. They are attempting to force more credit on the market partly by forcing down interest rates directly, and partly through the purchase of government securities. Both policies are dubious even from the standpoint of the aim that the Reserve system has directly in view. Cheap money always encourages borrowing during a boom; and the cheap-money policy of the federal authorities in 1928 and 1929 encouraged that borrowing to the point of disaster. But cheap money—as one would think the Federal Reserve authorities should have learned a hundred times over by now—does not necessarily encourage borrowing in a period of stagnation. Why should it? If a manufacturer cannot find a market for his goods, why should he borrow, at *any* interest rate, to increase his operations? And if he were foolish enough to want to do so, would a bank be likely to risk its money on him? Indeed, it never seems to occur to the Federal Reserve authorities that artificially low money rates may actually lead to a *contraction* of the volume of bank loans. Instead of thinking exclusively of the borrower, they might begin to look at the problem from the standpoint of the lender. When the bonds of such railroads as the Pennsylvania and the New York Central can be bought in the open market at discounts of more than 40 per cent from parity, why should banks be anxious to force their money on commercial borrowers at rates of 3¼, 2, and even 1 per cent? They will do so only with what is called "prime paper," and there is no excess of such paper to be had today. When the risks of lending are high, it requires high rates to encourage lenders.

The purchase of government securities on the present scale is even more dubious. In 1929 the total holdings of government securities by the Federal Reserve banks amounted to $147,000,000; they amount today to $1,191,000,000, and $306,000,000 of these holdings have been acquired in the last three weeks alone. One purpose of this policy is to force the commercial banks to buy securities. It may conceivably have that effect, and if the main object of the Administration's solicitude is the price of securities, the policy may be in small part successful, at least for a time. But the belief that the policy will raise commodity prices is almost certainly doomed to disappointment. Long before that point arrives it will probably lead to gold withdrawals, which will necessitate a contraction of loans to protect our gold supply.

The next most important inflationary move is perhaps the Goldsborough bill, as this has already been reported favorably by the House Banking and Currency Committee. It is in some respects an amazingly naive document, directing the Reserve Board to take steps to raise commodity prices to a predetermined level and keep them there. It does, however, imply the machinery for doing this in its suggestions that the "price" of gold be changed in accordance with changes in general conditions. This is merely another way of advocating changes in the weight of gold in the dollar; but there is no evidence that any of the members of the committee have any real notion of the implications and probable consequences of such action. More serious, because it is likely to get further in Congress, is the Patman proposal to issue $2,200,000,000 in fiat money to pay the soldiers' bonus. If the shock to confidence were not too great, this might possibly lead to no more than a corresponding retirement of Federal Reserve notes and other outstanding forms of currency; but it is far more probable that panicky gold withdrawals would force us off the gold basis, in which case we should be launched on a course of inflation and fluctuating currency of which it would be impossible to predict the outcome. It is altogether probable, however, that the damage done would far outweigh any incidental benefits.

Henry Hazlitt, in his two articles in *The Nation* proposing the devaluation of the dollar, remarked that we must think of such a step as a surgeon thinks of a major operation, and that we must try every possible less drastic remedy before resorting to it. Among these less drastic remedies he placed foremost tariff reduction and cancelation of reparations and war debts. The analogy might be carried further. A major operation, however necessary, is not without danger even when performed by a skilled man with clean and delicate instruments; it is fatal when performed with an ax by a butcher, and the crude type of inflation proposed in the Goldsborough and Patman bills could only lead us on a path of self-destruction.

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Stimson at Geneva

WHEN Henry L. Stimson sailed for Europe several weeks ago there was great commotion in the European press. Continental statesmen were quoted as saying that his presence at Geneva would give new life to the Disarmament Conference, that this new demonstration of our readiness to cooperate in European affairs would surely help solve many of the political problems which were then—and still are—endangering the Geneva conference. Unhappily, no details were given as to the precise means by which this desirable goal was to be reached. And now Mr. Stimson is returning from Geneva, "clearly disappointed," as the press dispatches have it. He failed, the dispatches say, to break through the Franco-German deadlock, the greatest obstacle to rapprochement in Europe, and he had no better success in his efforts to bring the French and American delegations together on the armaments question. So Geneva is once more plunged into gloom.

But how could it have been otherwise? Certainly Secretary Stimson could have had no real hope of persuading France and Germany to bury their fundamental differences—unless, of course, he had something to offer in return. What would the French want? Before all else, that full measure of security they have been demanding these last several years. Until that is achieved, France may be expected to cling to its system of military alliances and its own huge military machine, and to insist upon keeping Germany in a weakened condition. The only way the United States could contribute to this security would be by accepting the frequently projected security pact under which we would be obligated to go to the defense of France whenever that country deemed itself in peril of attack or invasion. Mr. Stimson knows only too well that neither the American government nor the American people is prepared to enter into such an entangling alliance. What have we to offer Germany? Nothing except our moral support, and in so far as that support strengthens German resistance it is bound to prolong the deadlock with France. The whole disarmament question is tied up with this political problem. The American delegation has proposed the abolition of offensive arms. Premier Tardieu has pointed out that even experts cannot distinguish between "offensive" and "defensive" weapons. He countered the American proposal with a return to the suggestion that an international army or police force be created under the auspices of the League of Nations. In brief, the world army, controlled by a League under French domination, would simply be a substitute for a security pact. This the United States would never accept.

There is little doubt that Secretary Stimson was aware of these obstacles when he set sail for Geneva. He must have known that if this was all that he was seeking his mission was foredoomed to failure. Hence the suspicion arises that he had other purposes in making this hurried visit to Europe. Perhaps he discussed the debt question, or, more likely, the increasingly grave Far Eastern situation. Secret diplomacy being what it is, we may never know just what was his chief objective. Let us hope that he did not enter into any secret arrangement that may some day drag us into an unpleasant diplomatic situation in the Far East.

Hart Crane

THE death of Hart Crane by drowning at sea may have a more special significance than that which attaches to the end of any gifted young artist. He was on his way home from Mexico, where a Guggenheim Fellowship had given him a year's vacation from the writing of advertising copy in a New York office and where, so it was understood, he had been composing a long poem concerned with the Mexican past. We are now told by his companions on the Orizaba, which docked April 29, that the Mexican poem was not even begun and that the poet had committed suicide because he was dissatisfied with his own work and was convinced that there "was no place in the world for poetry today."

The public taken as a whole will remain as indifferent to the fate of the Mexican epic as it has been to any poem which Hart Crane published. For he was far from popular. The difficulty of reading his work was enough to account for this fact, though there was the additional argument brought against him by Max Eastman, who in "The Literary Mind" recently took the poetry of Crane as the text for a chapter called The Cult of Unintelligibility. But Hart Crane did after all have a public, and although it was small it was devoted; and as time goes on there will be those to whom "White Buildings" and "The Bridge" are no longer unintelligible—or, if they are, to whom it will not matter in view of the fact that they contain phrases, lines, passages of a very great and pure poetic energy. Their energy, indeed, was something almost unique in these days which hear the grand note so seldom. Here it sounded easily and freshly, if only now and then; here, in the midst of much confusion and misdirection, and in a mind which had little more than a primitive vitality to reveal, it did make itself clearly heard. Those, then, who continue to be more interested in the poetry of a poem than in anything else about it—for instance, the ease with which an indolent intelligence can apprehend it—will continue to recognize Hart Crane as one of the few powerful writers of the century; and will find a better explanation of his obscurity in Allen Tate's introduction to "White Buildings" than they will find in Mr. Eastman's charge that this obscurity expressed the deliberate intention of a cult.

"Crane's poems," said Mr. Tate in 1926, "are a fresh vision of the world, so intensely personalized in a new creative language that only the strictest and most unprepossessed effort of attention can take it in. Until vision and subject completely fuse, the poems will be difficult. The comprehensiveness and lucidity of any poetry, the capacity for poetry being assumed as proved, are in direct proportion to the availability of a comprehensive and perfectly articulated given theme." That Crane had found no such theme, Mr. Tate implied, was the fault perhaps of the age, which no longer sees the world as a whole. Crane had to see the world as a special, personal thing, and had to invent a language for it. It was his distinction that the language he invented had so few points of difference after all from that of the great happy poets who have written in English. What he wanted to say it was hard to know. The way he said it was powerful, memorable, and precise.

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An Open Letter to Governor Roosevelt

MY DEAR GOVERNOR: If there is one thing clear about the crisis in which the country finds itself it is that the gravity of our plight calls for outspoken, courageous leadership. Unless my thirty-five years of journalistic experience have played me false, the bulk of our people are sick to death of the ordinary political flim-flam, of the pussy-footing, selfishness, and cowardice of our politicians, of their trimming on every conceivable issue. The people are becoming dangerously cynical; they are losing what faith they had left in our institutions; they are immersing themselves in their own affairs and forgetting matters of state because they have abandoned hope of intelligent and trustworthy leaders. They want no more of the familiar bunk, no more glittering, highly moral, and incontrovertible generalities. They are nauseated by the prevailing type of political speeches from Mr. Hoover's down, most of them as devoid of real substance as they are illiterate. They know, too, that the same old worn-out phrases about having faith in America and our unparalleled institutions and about our own surpassing greatness and virtue mean no more in the mouths of Democrats than in the mouths of Republicans. They understand that there is not an iota of fundamental difference between the speeches of a Cox, a Harding, a Joe Robinson, a Coolidge, a Garner, or a Hoover. They realize that not a single bill or issue has come before the present or the last Congress upon which the parties have divided on lines of principle or political theory; that on every measure Democrats and Republicans have indiscriminately voted on both sides. The very remedies urged by President Hoover, which you describe as forwarding the corporations and overlooking the "forgotten man," were enacted by the votes of members of your own party.

The public is also aware by bitter suffering that the crisis which Mr. Hoover and his Cabinet for two years made light of and lied about, until it became too menacing for their Dr. Coué treatment, is something unprecedented in its magnitude and effect; that it is endangering the national life. They do not need to be told that, despite a couple of excellent remedial measures for which the President deserves his share of the credit, the situation is steadily getting worse; that industry, as shown by steel and iron production, railroad earnings, and motor-car sales, is still sinking; that unemployment steadily increases, while charitable funds for the unemployed are becoming exhausted with little hope of replacement. It is no exaggeration to say that the lives of millions of Americans have already been warped by this disaster precisely as the World War (into which we entered only to plunge into debt, to win the ill-will of our Allies, and to bring this economic misery upon us) affected the lives of every man, woman, and child in America. Another year of this crisis and great classes of Americans will be impoverished to a degree that will make recovery impossible for the elder generation, even if our social system survives the shock.

All of which offers an opportunity for leadership unsurpassed since 1861. Do you remember the words with which Woodrow Wilson warned his countrymen in 1912 of what might happen if the wrong kind of leadership came to pass?

> Don't you know that some man with eloquent tongue, without conscience, who did not care for the nation could put this whole country into a flame? Don't you know that this country from one end to the other believes that something is wrong? What an opportunity it would be for some man without conscience to spring up and say: "This is the way, follow me!"—and lead in paths of destruction!

Do these words not apply to the present situation a thousand times more than they did to that existing when they were uttered? We were, Mr. Wilson said, in the "presence of a revolution—not a bloody revolution; America is not given to the spilling of blood. . . ." Few realized it then. Few believed him. Today men's hearts begin to stand still. They dare not look ahead.

What a glorious opportunity for leadership the hour offers! What a glorious opportunity for one like Franklin D. Roosevelt, to whom the gods have been generous to a degree, conferring wealth, social position, family prestige, personal charm, one opportunity after another for public service; only once have they averted their faces, and then to give you the chance to demonstrate superb courage, genuine heroism, in overcoming what for many men would have been complete physical disaster. You are now facing the greatest moment of your career. It is within your power to rally to your side untold numbers of men and women who know now, as Woodrow Wilson did in 1912, that it *is* a revolution we need; that "we are in a temper to reconstruct economic society, as we were once in a temper to reconstruct political society, and political society may itself undergo a radical modification in the process." Not a single one of the candidates for public office is in a better position than you to throw aside party shackles, to emancipate himself from political chicanery. You owe to no one but yourself the greatest majority in the history of the State of New York. You owe it to no one but yourself that the movement to nominate you for the Presidency has gone so fast and so far; that the impression has gone abroad that, despite your weakness toward Tammany Hall and your uncalled-for abuse of men striving to free New York City from the curse of that society of political plunderers and grafters, you are essentially a liberal; that you have indicated your desire to free the people from the "vicious system" under which we live, which, as Mr. Wilson said, is "far-reaching in effect upon the whole fabric of life, touching to his injury every inhabitant of the land . . . stifling everywhere the free spirit of American enterprise."

But this is not enough for you. That is shown by the unfavorable reaction to recent speeches you have made, by which you have alienated men who had hoped to give you their unqualified support. No one could read those speeches and not lay them down with disappointment. That you used the same words about the tariff which Al Smith used three days before is perhaps excusable. But inexcusable is

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your acceptance of the protectionist doctrine, and your failure to utter one word in protest against the proceedings in Washington, where the Democrats, forgetting their old slogan of victory, "a tariff for revenue only," are helping to erect additional tariffs against petroleum products, coal, and probably copper—a Democratic procedure which Walter Lippmann has just denounced as utterly indefensible and scandalous and as making "ridiculous their whole case against the Republican tariff policy." If you do not speak out before these outrageous tariffs become law you will have no right to open your lips on this subject either before or after the nominating convention. Again, you made the great blunder of correctly charging Mr. Hoover with being more interested in the corporations than in the "forgotten man," the plain American citizen, but of not choosing the right example to prove your case, and you have been unable to reply to your critics, or to your former friend and party associate who declared that you had used the words of a demagogue. Contrary to all the facts, you have said that this country is not and never would be a plutocracy, forgetting that the Wilson Administration of which you were a member came into office partly because Mr. Wilson declared that America was no longer a country governed by the people, but had become "an invisible empire" controlled by "the bosses and their employers, the special interests." You have recalled your attitude on the power problem in New York State, but you have not said what you would do on this issue if you should be elected to the Presidency. Nor have you set forth in detail in any way specifically your position on any one of the great issues of the day, save that you have said that you are a wet, without, however, defining what you mean by that.

Hence men everywhere are thrown back into complete discouragement. I meet every day voters of your political faith, though not of mine, who, I have taken for granted, would be upon your side. They are quite frank in declaring that if this is all that you have to offer they see no reason whatever for a change, although they abominate Mr. Hoover and his works and think him the poorest excuse for an efficient Executive that has ever reached the White House. They will stay at home in the absence of a new third party. You have deeply stabbed the faith that is within Americans that an emergency brings a leader, that our institutions are to survive. Yet the thing that stands out crystal clear is that if you would but take your stand unequivocally and fearlessly, and give your answer to some dozen questions in words that every man can understand, that are not susceptible of different meanings, that are not spoken in the spirit of one who would be all things to all men, great masses everywhere would rise up to your support.

Here are some of these questions. I challenge you to answer them, with the assurance that if you have the courage to reply you will do more to strengthen and advance your campaign than all the compromises and the promises of office that you might make in an uninterrupted month of political bargaining.

1. Are you a protectionist or not? Yes or no?
2. If no, will you, if elected, demand radical lateral tariff reductions? Yes or no?
3. Are you for the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment? Yes or no?
4. Do you favor canceling or reducing the international debts? Yes or no?
5. Are you for genuine, far-reaching disarmament on land and sea for America, without regard to what other nations may do? Yes or no?
6. If elected President, will you apply the same principles to the power problem which you have enunciated in New York State? Yes or no?
7. Will you favor government operation and distribution of power at Boulder Dam and Muscle Shoals? Yes or no?
8. Do you favor the entrance of the United States into the League of Nations at some future time? Yes or no?
9. Will you favor an immediate international conference for the reduction of tariffs and the regulation of international currency problems? Yes or no?
10. Do you favor the recognition of Soviet Russia? Yes or no?
11. Will you pledge yourself to complete overhauling of the Veterans' Bureau expenditures, which now total more than the cost of the entire government in 1914? Yes or no?
12. Will you favor the amalgamation of our practically bankrupt railroads into a national corporation to be managed by directors appointed by the government, which must now finance them lest they collapse? Yes or no?
13. Will you abolish the Federal Farm Board so that it may not foolishly gamble away any more of the taxpayers' millions? Yes or no?
14. Last and most important: Since the number of Americans without work is increasing, and the plight of many of the destitute is approaching the unbearable, while the prospect of raising from private means the sums needed to support at least 12,000,000 unemployed is plainly not possible, will you advocate direct federal-government relief so that Americans may not starve to death alongside of warehouses bursting with food? Yes or no?

I submit that there is not a single question that cannot be answered directly, effectively, immediately. I repeat that nothing would so advance your candidacy as would an honest, straightforward reply to these questions, which would let every American know where you stand and what you will do if the highest power in the land should be granted to you.

In the hope of an immediate reply, and with the high personal regard which has marked our long friendship, I am

Yours sincerely,

OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

The Nation on WOR

Oswald Garrison Villard, Editor of The Nation, *has arranged to broadcast a series of weekly talks on outstanding public issues. In his first address, on May 11, he will discuss the question*

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Help Wanted—for Chicago*

By MAURITZ A. HALLGREN

Chicago, April 12

CHICAGO must be helped, and that soon. This young, boisterous, and somewhat violent city has about reached the end of its road. True, that road is lined with unpleasant and costly memories, with records of both political and private thievery beyond compare. From the police strike, the gas steal, and the Yerkes franchise case of the last century, through the Haymarket riot, the Pullman strike, and the assassination of Mayor Harrison, up to the race riots, the labor racketeering, the gangsterism and Thompsonism, the million-dollar cinder paths, and the organized tax-dodging of the present decade, Chicago's story has been one of violence and of utter disregard for the legal and human rights of the private citizen and the small taxpayer. Financial pirates, as in the Yerkes railway case, have tried to steal its streets from under the very nose of the municipality; industrial pirates have actually stolen innumerable special privileges; a few leading families have dominated the town socially, politically, and economically, allowing the machine politicians to carry the burden of blame and criticism in return for the pleasure of finishing the job of milking the public. Today the politicians have run the city and county governments into an apparently bottomless hole, and so at last the bankers and industrialists have been compelled to come out into the open to show who really controls the city. They have set constitutional rights at defiance and have erected a supergovernment. But this revolting record can and must be overlooked. Chicago is in desperate need. It cannot pay its debts; it cannot feed its hungry. Here there are 700,000 men and women without work, more than 100,000 families on the dole. These people are being fed for the time being, but not with Chicago's money. State funds are being used, funds borrowed on the strength of the State government's credit, and even this money will be exhausted before long. And no more help from that quarter is in sight.

Chicago's charitable agencies began to feel the pinch of increasing unemployment in May, 1929, five months before the Wall Street upheaval, when their records showed an abnormally large number of applicants for relief. It was not until May of the following year, however, that this abnormal load took on the proportions of an emergency, and not until the autumn of 1930 that the community, through the creation of the Governor's Unemployment Relief Commission, formally recognized the existence of this emergency. Even then those interested in the relief problem, with the exception of the trained social workers, minimized its extent. One of the city's most prominent business men, who now favors federal relief, confessed to me that he recalls with shame the speeches he made a year and more ago; then he was saying that prosperity would soon return and therefore it was unwise to stress the need for relief, but today he realizes that whether prosperity returns or not neither the city nor the State can provide the money necessary to feed, clothe, and shelter Chicago's unemployed. And so the Governor's Commission, in a public subscription drive, raised only $5,000,000 for Chicago. That fund was soon spent—unemployment jumped more than 200 per cent in Chicago in 1930—and another subscription drive was launched, this time by an organization of business men and others incorporated as the Joint Emergency Relief Fund. A total of $10,000,000 was sought and with considerable difficulty was finally obtained. Thirty-five per cent of this money came from business establishments; 33 per cent from individuals—this included a few, but only a few, really substantial contributions, the remainder being small in size; 30 per cent from employees of business houses; and 2 per cent from benefits and other sources.

The $10,000,000 was supposed to tide the city over for a year, that is, into the summer of 1932, but by December, 1931, it was clear that the fund would be exhausted within two months. Business and civic leaders became frightened. To make things worse, on December 30 County Judge Jarecki handed down his decision declaring illegal the assessment base used in taxing property in Cook County. While the decision did not affect relief funds, the city and county being already without funds and therefore contributing nothing, it had the effect of greatly increasing the panicky feeling that swept the city. Mayor Cermak talked of closing the City Hall and of thus adding many thousands to the ranks of the jobless. It was agreed all around that only the State could help, but the legislature in Illinois is in the hands of the downstate politicians. In Christmas week a conference of business men, relief workers, and legislators was called, to which nineteen Senators and fifty-six Representatives were invited. But only one Senator and seven Representatives attended. The alarm increased. In fervid editorials published prominently on their front pages the Chicago newspapers called for action, drawing somewhat exaggerated and not wholly realistic pictures of the suffering of the unemployed. Leading business men hurried to Springfield to lobby for State relief. In the first week of February the relief bill came before the legislature. When the voting began in the House it was seen that the bill would fail, and only the parliamentary strategy of the Speaker, who suspended the voting before the roll call was completed, saved the measure. After numerous conferences, at which the Chicago lobbyists used every method of persuasion at their command, another vote was taken and the relief measure forced through by a narrow margin.

The emergency relief act sets up a $25,000,000 fund to be paid for by the counties' share of the State gasoline tax. This is subject to the approval of the voters at a referendum to be held next November. But under Illinois law tax-anticipation warrants can nevertheless be sold to the amount of 75 per cent of the anticipated tax collection. Thus the sum of $18,750,000 was made technically available by the action of the legislature, although to date only $12,000,000 worth of the anticipation warrants have been sold. These special notes bear interest at the rate of 6 per cent. Approxi-

* The seventh of a series of articles by Mr. Hallgren on unemployment in various parts of the country.—EDITOR THE NATION.

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mately $15,000,000 of the State fund has been allocated to Cook County and Chicago. As the Joint Emergency Relief administration is now expending $3,000,000 monthly, it can be seen how long this State money will last. There is no hope of obtaining more help from the State this year, which is a political year, for no candidate or office-holder wants to go before the voters with the plea that taxes be still further increased. The $15,000,000 fund is far from adequate. More than 100,000 families in Cook County are today being fed by charity. At $25 a week, the minimum subsistence level set by the Charity Organization Society, the maintenance of these families would require a total expenditure during 1932 of no less than $130,000,000, or almost eight times the funds available.

With the support of many of the liberals and social agencies of the city Joseph L. Gill was in November, 1930, elected Clerk of the Municipal Court. He had promised to appoint trained social workers in place of the usual political hacks to take over the task of adjusting social problems that come up every day in the specialized branches of the Municipal Court. Whatever action he may have taken with regard to the Court of Domestic Relations, the Boys' Court, and other branches, he ignored his pledge so far as it concerned the Renters' Court until August of last year. On August 3 there was a rent riot at South Dearborn and Fifty-first streets, in the heart of the Negro district, three men being killed by the police. After that Clerk Gill heeded the social agencies and installed trained workers, and trouble from that quarter has been minimized. However, there is still grave danger of riots in connection with evictions.

Dozens of times municipal court bailiffs sent to evict families for non-payment of rent have turned around and paid the rent rather than become parties to the awful process of dumping the household belongings of helpless, destitute people into the street. Some policemen, too, in a few individual cases, have refused to be harsh with members of the Unemployed Councils who frequently gather to put the furniture back into flats and houses from which it has been removed. Yet it cannot be denied that there has been a good deal of police brutality and terrorism throughout the unemployment crisis. In a recent week more than eighty persons were arrested in connection with eviction cases and street demonstrations. The International Labor Defense said that one to four arrests were being made every day. Known Communist leaders and other radical agitators are picked up on sight; some have been arrested scores of times. Police Lieutenant Make Mills, commander of the Red Squad, has publicly declared more than once that he is pursuing a definite policy of friendliness toward the radicals. Mills is a Russian Jew who lays proud claim to the fact that he took part in the 1905 revolution in Russia. He says that he sympathizes with the unemployed and the radicals, but adds that he knows how to manage them when they get out of hand. There is considerable substance to his contention. The police present at the street demonstrations are usually friendly but firm, although the unfortunate agitators who are from time to time arrested somehow or other manage to get themselves beaten up in the police stations, away from the sight of the curious public. Yet it is not entirely true that the police brutality is confined to cell rooms. After a demonstration in front of the relief station in Humboldt Park a few weeks ago three policemen and three demonstrators were sent to the hospital. More than twenty participants needed surgical attention after another demonstration on Michigan Avenue, which was ostensibly directed against the Japanese consulate, but was actually conducted by the Unemployed Councils. In the Michigan Avenue affair from fifty to seventy-five people were arrested, more than half of whom were what the newspapers call innocent bystanders.

The Chicago correspondent of the New York *Evening Post* recently telegraphed his paper: "A consortium of trade and finance is usurping power from politicians as a result of Chicago's 'taxpayers' strike' in an effort to save the city from bankruptcy. A group of bank presidents, department-store heads, and chiefs of manufacturing companies, without legal charter of any kind, has grabbed legislative and administrative authority with scarcely a protest from the regular office-holders." Included in this supergovernment, the dispatch said, were "such men as Sewell Avery, head of Montgomery Ward and Company and the United States Gypsum Company, and usually considered the Chicago representative of the house of Morgan; George Fairweather, business manager of the University of Chicago; President Melvin Traylor of the First National Bank; James Simpson of Marshall Field and Company, and a number of the most powerful railroad presidents, real-estate owners, and meat packers of the city." Since then Fred W. Sargent, president of the Chicago and Northwestern, has perfected an extra-legal committee on public expenditures, which includes the men mentioned above and in addition such members of outstanding Chicago families as W. R. Dawes, Potter Palmer, Stanley Field, Ernest R. Graham, George Richardson, Edward L. Ryerson, Jr., Gordon Strong, Graham Aldis, William M. Ellis, and Albert H. Wetten. Chairman Sargent declared that "unless the business men of Chicago can be awakened to this situation, unless they are united and coordinated in a militant drive, with the single objective of reducing governmental expenditures and balancing budgets, the prosperity of the city will be threatened for years to come." The local press has indorsed the movement, Colonel Robert R. McCormick, owner of the Chicago *Tribune,* declaring that action was necessary because "our city councils and legislatures and Congress have become mere assemblies of 'yes men' to execute the will of a growing class holding office by law and grinding down the producers of wealth as did the tax-gatherers of Louis XIV and John of England in the dark ages of yore." Even Mayor Cermak has come hat in hand to deal with the supergovernment. He is, according to his friends, "morally obligated" to take orders from these men; he conducts the business of the municipality not in the council chambers of the City Hall, but in the comfortable rooms of the Chicago and Union League clubs. His principal adviser is Sewell Avery. It is good politics at the moment to appear to be doing something toward cutting city expenditures, and Cermak needs to be a good politician.

There can be no question that the city and county governments are bankrupt and thus in no position to shoulder any part of the relief burden. Three factors have brought this situation about: first, the usual political corruption, which is always a heavy drain on public funds, but which cannot exist without at least the tacit support of the business men and bankers of the community; second, the multitude of

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political divisions and taxing bodies, numbering altogether more than 400; third, the tax strike. Anyone acquainted with Chicago's history knows of the scores of cases in which business houses, banks, department stores, and newspapers have profited directly and handsomely through political corruption. Hence it is not difficult to understand why the business community long maintained a stony silence in the face of the seemingly endless political scandals in Chicago. It is only now when taxes are increasing to a point amounting virtually to confiscation that the business men and bankers are beginning to complain. Should the Sargent committee succeed in bringing about a metropolitan district government for Chicago and Cook County, under which most of the present political divisions would be consolidated and the hundreds of taxing bodies reduced to one or two, it would be doing the community a valuable and lasting service. That, without doubt, is one certain way of reducing governmental expenditures. But the politicians have the power to block such a reform, which would mean the abolition of thousands of political sinecures, and therefore the business men and bankers would once more have to deal with the politicians in order to get something done.

The most important of the three factors is the tax strike. The adherents of the supergovernment are not denouncing political boodle and graft, they are not talking of reforming the governmental structure; they talk only of government extravagance. In short, they are opposed to paying increased taxes, or even the present taxes. Chicago would be no worse off than many other municipalities were it not for the tax strike. The members of the Sargent committee are very obviously putting up a smoke screen for the sole purpose of hiding the responsibility of themselves and their class for having brought Chicago to its present impasse. In his decision of last December County Judge Jarecki found that there was $9,300,000,000 worth of real estate and $16,000,000,000 in taxable personal property in Chicago and its suburbs. The total tax rate on $1,000 of assessed valuation is $61.50, but on a basis of actual instead of assessed valuation the rate is $22.76. Thus, if all taxes were paid, the city and county would be collecting $575,828,000 every year, which should be enough to run the local government and leave a good bit over for relief work.

The wealthy class makes no secret of the fact that it is not paying its taxes. Indeed, some of its more prominent members have organized an association to conduct a tax boycott. Exception must be noted, however, for the individuals here and there who are fulfilling this social obligation in good faith. Collection of the 1929 taxes began early last year, but returns to date show that for the county as a whole only 68 per cent of these taxes has been paid. Yet that is a better showing than has been reported from some of the North Shore suburbs, where many of the city's most influential and wealthiest bankers and business men live. In Winnetka only 43 per cent of the taxes has been collected; in Wilmette, only 38 per cent; in Kenilworth, 32 per cent; and in Glencoe, 28 per cent. Again, in Chicago, the Lincoln Park district, where the wealth per capita is the highest in the city, has reported a 59.84 per cent collection (for park purposes) as against the county average of 68 per cent. County Treasurer McDonough recently said that "of the owners who have paid on 18,129 parcels of real estate, 17,315 have paid in full, but a large percentage are small property-owners and the total they pay is small in comparison with the aggregate of taxes." This is not only a tax strike; it is open revolt against government. One must consider the present state of affairs little short of anarchy when civic societies feel impelled to flood the town with posters calling upon the residents to "Pay What You Think Is a Fair Tax! Pay Now! Keep Your Schools Open!"

Mayor Cermak has published a list of a few of the leading citizens who have been instrumental in organizing the tax strike. His list includes such prominent citizens as Nathan William MacChesney, Robert P. Bass, Murray Wolbach, and Shirley T. High. MacChesney owes $25,142 on his 1929 real-estate taxes; Bass owes $56,303; Wolbach, $36,003; and High, $15,938. Previously the Association of Real Estate Taxpayers of Illinois had published a somewhat similar list, revealing the tax records of some of the supporters of the Sargent committee and advisers of Mayor Cermak. Robert R. McCormick, editor and publisher of the Chicago *Tribune,* which has been urging everyone to pay his proper share of the tax bill, listed his personal property, including securities, at only $25,250, which calls for a tax of $1,515. Colonel McCormick owns most of the valuable *Tribune* stock, which certainly is worth far in excess of $25,250. President Traylor of the First National Bank gave $4,500 as the value of his personal property, and so pays a tax of only $270. Silas Strawn, head of the United States Chamber of Commerce, and a millionaire many times over, was put down for a personal property tax of only $120. George M. Reynolds, chairman of the Continental Illinois Bank, the biggest in Chicago, admitted owning personal property worth $10,000, and therefore was taxed $600. Albert D. Lasker, advertising man, was taxed $180 on his personal belongings; Arthur Cutten, the wheat gambler, $24; Louis Florsheim, head of the shoe company bearing his name, $90; and S. J. T. Straus, chairman of S. W. Straus and Company, only $18.

However one looks at the relief problem here, the conclusion is inescapable that not only the city and county governments but wealthy individual citizens as well are dodging their just share of the burden. They are doing so through the tax strike, but they are also doing so in other ways. They gave relatively little to the two relief funds collected in Chicago, much more than half the total amounts contributed coming from wage-earners and other small givers. They are opposed to federal relief, for they know that the cost of such relief can be passed on to them through the federal income tax. The emergency State relief act was carefully drawn with a view to protecting them; it is to be financed out of the gasoline tax, that is, by a sales tax which in proportion to income and wealth takes far more from the salaried man with a small car than it does from the banker or industrialist with a fleet of luxurious automobiles. The relief act provides for the sale of tax-anticipation warrants to make it possible to obtain the needed money in advance. These warrants pay interest at a 6 per cent rate; they are tax exempt, and have the credit of the State of Illinois behind them. The wealthy could hardly ask for a better return, and the security given is as good as any that might be had nowadays. Yet the sales committee is finding it extremely difficult to dispose of these notes, so difficult, indeed, that it has decided to suspend its campaign for a few months in order to give the potential buyers a breathing spell.

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Milwaukee Has a Plan

By LESLIE F. CROSS

"THOSE horrid Socialists" captured Milwaukee's city government by an unexpected parliamentary coup on April 19, and within two hours laid the basis for probably the most ambitious social and economic program attempted recently in an American municipality. The elections had doubled the Socialist representation in the City Council, and three of the four major administrative offices fell to Socialists. At the inaugural session the twelve Socialist aldermen secured the support of two non-partisan insurgents—in barter for a minor appointment, it is whispered—and proceeded to override the non-partisan bloc by a single vote, winning the privilege of organizing the council. Mayor Hoan then presented his program for municipal banking, city marketing, a general six-hour day for city employees, and steps toward acquisition of the public utilities. Within a few minutes resolutions embodying his suggestions were submitted.

It may shock and bewilder those, on the one hand, who regard Socialists as shaggy-haired dynamitards, and those, on the other hand, who believe Socialists are unpractical opportunists, to discover how swiftly and efficiently the party can operate in Milwaukee. It may surprise even a few citizens of Milwaukee to realize that Brisbane Hall can act with the precision and discipline, if without the corruption, of Tammany Hall.

The Socialists of Milwaukee have been neither afraid nor ashamed to play politics. They had been swept into definite control of the city once before, in 1910. Two years later their Republican and Democratic foemen gathered their forces under the single chevron of non-partisanism and succeeded in erasing the Socialist margin of control. That premature flush of Socialist power had left no solid or monolithic achievement in pure socialism. To municipalize the utilities at that time was impossible because antiquated State legislation shouldered an unwieldy financial burden upon publicly owned plants and because the previous administration, notoriously reckless and corrupt, had sunk Milwaukee in a slough of debt which had first to be liquidated. In the years which followed, Socialists in the City Council and in the legislature led an agitation which at length ended in virtual home rule for the municipality and a fairer and simplified procedure toward utility ownership.

Under the shrewd leadership of Mayor Hoan the city gradually shaved its bonded debt, reorganized its financial methods, and set up an amortization fund which has gone far to stabilize Milwaukee's credit. This attentive untangling of the Gordian knot of municipal finances was a *sine qua non* for socialization. So unspectacular was the preparation that the citizenry of Milwaukee awoke the other morning with surprise to find itself in a boiling crucible.

Not content with what is conceded to be the soundest financial standing in the United States, Milwaukee is hard at work on plans for a municipal national bank, designed to sever, wherever it may be expedient, the city's vassalage to private banking. In the program which he laid before the council, Mayor Hoan said:

> The complete control of finance and credit is now in the hands of private banks. The national banks have the right to invest their funds in United States bonds, deposit the same in the federal Treasury, and are then given the right to issue bank notes which circulate as money. There is no reason why municipalities, under proper restrictions, should not have the same right, and thus have part, if not all, of the cash needed for public works supplied at a tremendous saving in interest payments.
>
> The money collected by the Postal Savings Bank, which draws 2 per cent interest, is turned over to private banks at 2½ per cent. Why should this be practiced when government is forced to borrow money it needs at from 3 to 6 per cent?
>
> I suggest that the city attorney assign one assistant to master this subject and the closest study be given by the Common Council to this problem.

The project, as sketched by city economists, provides for the acceptance of deposits on the security of sound municipal bonds. More delicate and legalistic, perhaps, is the proposal for the valorization of city bonds, under carefully guarded limitations, in some ratio of exchange with federal bonds to permit the issuance of currency. The municipal bank, operating under this schedule, would eliminate Milwaukee's $48,000,000 bonded indebtedness in twenty years, and in the meanwhile it would save the city more than $2,000,000 a year in interest charges.

Perhaps a more intimate friend of the pocket-book of the electorate is the marketing plan, which was the storm center of a bitter political campaign. Non-tax funds, of which some $7,500 in profits realized from the mayor's quasi-official sale of foodstuffs during the war would form the nucleus, are to be used for administrative machinery to distribute necessaries at a minimum of profit wherever the councilmen detect the spoor of profiteers. The Mayor declared in his message:

> I call attention to the fact that coke that sells for $6.50 in Detroit and for about $8 in other cities is sold in Milwaukee for $12.40 a ton. I recommend that steps be taken at once to transfer this marketing fund and to proceed to put coke on the market at reasonable prices. I request that you also investigate coal prices, and if they are found to be excessive, to sell coal at least as long as the prices are excessive. To avoid any misunderstanding, I should like to make clear that I have not in the past and do not now desire the city to go into the general retail business, with the possible exception of milk and fuel. . . .
>
> I further believe the council would do well to investigate the distribution of our milk supply. It is now a virtual monopoly, controlled by outside capital. If you find that both farmers and citizens can be better protected by municipal control, then why not proceed to take over this business? This will not affect the tax rate but will be maintained out of the earnings from the business itself.

Skyscraping prices in fuel, milk, and other necessaries have demonstrated to the satisfaction of the city government that freedom of trade, ostensibly enforced by State and federal legislation, is a myth in congested areas where docking

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and unloading facilities and distributive systems are so easily controlled by a few interests. Faced with the realization that the courts are unable to restrict profiteering, Milwaukee has found that city marketing is probably the only cudgel stout enough to force down basic prices.

The entire administration program affords possibly the most courageous and extensive example of balanced city planning in North America. Milwaukee believes that community government is properly a coordinated organism which must adapt itself to changing tides in economics and sociology. A complete reformation in governmental machinery is a part of the program—including the consolidation of city and county governments and councils of department heads to coordinate municipal operations.

The sweeping reforms on which the Wisconsin metropolis has embarked have been made feasible only through foresight and painstaking municipal housekeeping. It is because of foresight and a watchful electorate that Milwaukee's credit leads the nation, that its tax rate is well under the average, and that its solvency has become a national distinction.

Sacred Bulls and Sinister Bears

By PAUL Y. ANDERSON

Washington, April 30

THE captain of finance who descends on Washington determined to make a monkey of a Senate investigating committee nearly always comes to grief, and President Whitney of the New York Stock Exchange may be listed as the latest casualty. Yet so beautifully did he get away with it during the first few days that I, who ought to know better, pitied the Banking and Currency Committee for its amateurishness and was resigned to a fiasco. The patois of the financial district rippled from President Whitney's tongue with soporific suavity. In dulcet tones he explained that short selling is not gambling, "but an integral part of speculation, the other part being marginal buying, both of which are essential to keep the market liquid." He murmured of "cushioning" and "stabilizing" influences. He was not sure what a bear raid might be, except that it was an impossibility. He had heard some talk of pools but was not certain how they were operated, if at all. About all that he was positive of was that the Stock Exchange is a splendid and indispensable institution and that the chastity of its practices is above suspicion. If he had not claimed most of the known virtues for it, the subsequent disclosures of market rigging and blue-sky promotion might seem less criminal in contrast. He took several days to describe the market as a benevolent institution. Matt Brush took two hours to prove that it is largely a craps game, and in thirty minutes Representative La Guardia showed that it sometimes operates with loaded dice. In retrospect Mr. Whitney's performance sounds like that of a piano-player sitting all alone in the parlor of a certain kind of establishment and playing "Home, Sweet Home" while business proceeds as usual in the upper rooms. I cannot be positive whether Whitney is the babe in the woods that his testimony makes him out or whether he is the wilful deceiver that La Guardia pronounced him, although thus far the weight of evidence is heavily on the side of Brush and La Guardia. In either instance one marvels that he remains at the head of the Stock Exchange.

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SOME inspired hand wrote in the New York *Herald Tribune* that the investigation might result in unfortunate consequences. Sure enough, one of the first consequences was the discovery that several New York financial writers, including one then employed by the *Herald Tribune*, had taken money for puffing certain stocks through the columns of their papers. We may acquit the editors of guilty knowledge and still be warranted in asking how that sort of thing could go on under their noses for any length of time without being detected. Editors should know their business, and systematic puffing is easily recognized. The truth is, as all newspapermen know, that financial writers are allowed to become entirely too much attached to the market and too much detached from their own offices. To those of us here who are familiar with the stern moral lectures which certain types of editors and financiers are constantly delivering to Congress, there is excruciating irony in the revelation that these financiers rigged the market for certain stocks, that the public was induced to buy them by stories written for these newspapers by bribe-taking reporters —and that when the inevitable collapse followed, these financiers and newspapers blamed it on Congress! Marvelous! It could only happen in the good old U. S. A. For the assurance of those who might have doubts, let me state that a great majority of reporters undoubtedly are honest. But don't place too much confidence in the editor or financier who makes a habit of blaming Congress.

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AS for the Senate inquiry, two things may be stated. First, information already in the possession of Chairman Norbeck shows that the committee has not scratched the surface and that disclosures of the utmost significance are inevitable unless someone puts the lid on; and, second, that terrific efforts are being made to put it on. Among the most anxious are men who have contributed heavily to the campaign funds of both political parties, and the pressure they will be able to apply can be estimated. Their anxiety is easy to understand when one knows the methods they employed and the type of characters with whom they associated in their schemes to unload inflated securities on the public. Brush was not overstating the situation when he said that Al Capone was a piker. Of course, none of these gentlemen —or only a few of the indiscreet—took any chance on going to jail. Whether the investigation can be smothered will soon be seen. It started in a curious fashion. Senator Walcott of Connecticut, President Hoover's spokesman on the committee, received an alarming telegram from George Barr Baker, the Administration's New York sentry, stating that a terrible bear raid was being hatched. It was inevitable that such a report from such a source would throw a scare into

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the Administration. Poor Mr. Hoover labors under the delusion that the return of prosperity is dependent on the return of a bull market and that forces mysterious and hostile to him are conspiring to keep the market down. In the absence of Chairman Norbeck, Walcott summoned the committee and launched the inquiry. A week later, when it became evident that the sacred bulls no less than the sinister bears were becoming unfavorably involved, the Connecticut statesman made a rather inglorious attempt to stop what he had started, but his colleagues simply brushed him aside and further humiliated him by leaving him off the steering subcommittee which it designated to plan future procedure. From this angle it appears that the thing has gone too far to be stopped, even by the Rockefellers, Raskobs, and Whitneys. But events will bear close watching, because the heat really is being turned on.

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THE Senate Finance Committee has by no means immortalized itself by its revision of the tax bill. A combination of Democrats and Progressive Republicans succeeded in making mild increases in the surtaxes, estate taxes, and corporation taxes, but this achievement was immediately nullified by the elimination of the House provision which applied the normal income rate to dividends, and the whole procedure became definitely ridiculous when a group of log-rollers first voted to include tariffs on oil, gasoline, coal, and copper, and then quarreled among themselves and voted them all out. The effect of such tariffs probably would be the destruction of the remaining vestiges of our trade with Canada and South America. To make up the revenue that would be lost by failing to apply the normal income rate to dividends, the committee proposes drastic increases in the normal rates on income from other sources. If that policy prevails, the Treasury deficit will be paid mainly by persons making between $3,500 and $25,000 a year. It must be admitted that the hearings did not serve greatly to illuminate the committee. Not even the carefully staged forensic gestures of Secretary Mills shed much light. Once more were heard the two familiar arguments against high taxes on large incomes, to wit: that they wouldn't produce any revenue; and that they would produce an exorbitant and cruel amount of revenue. Once again we were told that a man would become discouraged and refuse to work any longer upon hearing that he would not be allowed to keep more than 53 per cent of his earnings after the first $5,000,000 a year, and would absolutely throw everything over and resign himself to despair if told that he could not leave his heirs more than 75 per cent of his fortune in excess of the first $10,000,000. All the arguments rested, as usual, on the premise that the thing which has made this nation great and prosperous is the unparalleled rapacity of its citizens. Individual avarice may be an important factor in the national economy, but I am not prepared to agree with Secretary Mills that the national destiny depends on pandering to it. If it is true that the rich are confessed and incorrigible tax-dodgers, so much more reason for soaking them!

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SEVERAL months ago the United States Chamber of Commerce initiated a general 10 per cent cut in the wages of its employees and ever since then it has been urging the government to do likewise. The force of the government's example would be tremendous and the number of "patriotic" employers to follow it would be legion. Nevertheless, the movement is encountering difficulties in the House, which under its liberalized rules seems bent on demonstrating that it has become a more democratic body than the Senate. President Hoover's generous proposal to bestow longer vacations (without pay) on government clerks already has been rejected, and the Administration's whole picayunish program of "economy" is in a fair way to be ditched. It should be. Government employees always have been notoriously underpaid. In Washington, where an army of them reside, commodity prices have remained comparatively high, and most of them are just now catching up on the instalment purchases made when their pay checks looked like cigar coupons. But if the Chamber of Commerce is disappointed by Congress, it can still "look to the press for leadership." I am proud to report that a 10 per cent reduction in salaries has been initiated by the newspapers owned by Cyrus H. K. Curtis (Philadelphia *Public Ledger, Evening Ledger,* and New York *Evening Post*), and that a similar reduction has been ordered by the New York *Times* to take effect May 1. In the case of Mr. Curtis (who also publishes the *Saturday Evening Post,* the *Ladies' Home Journal,* and the *Country Gentleman*) this regrettable necessity may be explained. In fact, it has been explained. Writing from aboard Mr. Curtis's magnificent yacht, Lyndonia, at Miami Beach, Arthur Brisbane recently reported that Mr. Curtis's net profits fell from $20,000,000 in 1930 to $8,000,000 in 1931. By making this cut in salaries Mr. Curtis will be able to keep the Lyndonia in commission. When the excellent reporters in the Washington bureau of the *Evening Post* and *Public Ledger* sit in their office on the twelfth floor of the Press Club Building here and watch the Lyndonia steam gallantly into harbor bearing its venerable owner to a dinner engagement at the White House—as it does once a year—they certainly must thrill to think of what their contributions meant. In the case of the *Times,* alas, no such comforting explanation is available. Its owners are filthy with cash and have been for years. Just think of writing that tripe *for less pay!*

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HUMBLED by events of the last two years, the Administration is edging nearer to recognition of Soviet Russia. Obviously this development is prompted more by necessity than desire. The bureaucrats in the State Department are no fonder of the despised Bolsheviks now than they were in 1922 when they succeeded in confusing Mr. Hughes. But finally they have reasoned around to the point of recognizing that if we are to have war with Japan, Russia is our natural —and indispensable—ally. But before the white-spatted and side-whiskered young-old blades in the State Department had arrived at this somewhat belated discovery, their brisker colleagues in the Department of Commerce had found that Russia offered the lone hope of nourishing our emaciated export trade. The idea, which has been common property among thinking persons in the capital for four or five years, threatens now to make a real impression on those who direct our foreign relations. The pressure of necessity may yet compel the Administration to do the thing which is both right and sensible.

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A Jewish Home in Russia

By WILLIAM ZUKERMAN

AMERICAN Jews celebrated last year the fiftieth anniversary of the great Jewish immigration from Russia into the United States. It was half a century ago, after the outbreak of the first Czaristic pogrom in the city of Elisabetgrad, that a group of Russian intellectuals, actuated by semi-socialistic and semi-nationalistic motives, left Russia for the United States with the intention of establishing a Communist Jewish colony in the New World. That colony was never started, but the much greater and more powerful Jewish communities of New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and other American cities arose in its stead.

It so happens that now, fifty years after the stream set out *from* Russia, a similar experiment is being started which may have the effect of bringing it back *to* Russia. It is a pity that this new experiment is being tried in a country so rich in sweeping social changes that what is in comparison a small experiment tends to become overshadowed. Even the big Jewish press of America has to all practical purposes ignored it. And yet it may well become a landmark in Jewish history, no less important than the first emigration to America fifty years ago.

The experiment in question is the recent opening by the Soviet Government of the Far Eastern district of Biro-Bidjan on the Amur River, near the Chinese frontier, as a place of immigration for Jews from outside the Soviet Union. The plan for settling Jews in Biro-Bidjan is not a new one. It was first proposed in the spring of 1928 by M. Kalinin, the President of the Soviet Union, at the conference of the Jewish Colonization Society held in Moscow. At that time the Jewish colonization movement in Soviet Russia was at its height. All the available land in the Crimea and Ukraine which the government had placed at the disposal of the Jews was exhausted, but the land hunger of the declassed Jewish people, deprived of land by the Czaristic regime and cut off from their middle-class occupations by the revolution, was far from appeased. The government, which was sincerely concerned to find a radical solution of the vexed Jewish problem, felt that new territories ought to be opened to these settlers and greater facilities offered for the expansion of their land movement.

The district of Biro-Bidjan—a vast tract of ten million acres of virgin soil, rich in natural resources—seemed to offer just those facilities which the Russian Jews needed most at that time to enable them to rebuild their shattered economic life. In addition, the area was sparsely populated and offered a unique opportunity for the establishment of a compact Jewish majority, segregated from other nationalities—a fact which would doubtless work toward the elimination of anti-Semitism and the solution of the Jewish problem. With its usual sweeping imagination in such matters the Soviet Government, therefore, offered Biro-Bidjan for the Jewish settlement, promising to declare the entire district an autonomous Jewish republic if Jews would settle there in sufficient numbers.

It is clear, of course, that this project has its resemblances to Zionism. There is a striking family likeness between the Kalinin and the Balfour declarations; between the Jewish National Home in Palestine and the Jewish National Republic in Siberia. It is quite possible that there was even a conscious desire on the part of the Soviet Government, in making its proposal, to compete with Great Britain. Anglo-Soviet rivalry was at its peak in 1928, and it would not be surprising to find that the Soviet Government saw in Biro-Bidjan another opportunity to "catch up and to outstrip" the bourgeois countries. Whether this was actually the motive or not, the striking resemblance between the two projects has certainly not helped the Biro-Bidjan movement. Zionists in Russia and elsewhere looked upon it as a sort of competition to the Jewish National Home in Palestine, and opposed it from the start. Non-nationalist Jews, on the other hand, were suspicious of the elements of Jewish nationalism in it and gave it a cool reception. Russian Jews lived so long in the compulsory ghetto of the Czaristic "Pale of Settlement" that now that its walls are down at last, they are none too anxious to accept even a voluntary segregation.

To add to these psychological difficulties, the Five-Year Plan, which was started soon after the Kalinin Declaration, raised quite unexpectedly new economic difficulties. For the new Russian factories and plants provided an easier and simpler solution of the problem of Jewish poverty than any colonization scheme, including Biro-Bidjan. Why should the average Russian Jew go to distant Siberia when the brightly lighted factories in the big cities nearer home are clamoring for workers, and are offering much greater opportunities than can be found on the land? The primary Jewish needs of 1928 which were chiefly responsible for the promulgation of the Siberian project were met more effectively by the rapidly growing Russian industry, and the movement of Jewish colonization in general and of Biro-Bidjan in particular received a definite setback. Ten thousand Jewish families were expected to rush to Biro-Bidjan immediately after the Kalinin Declaration, but only 3,800 had actually settled there by last summer, and the prospects of the Jewish National Home in Soviet Russia seemed at that time to be very poor indeed.

It was then that the Soviet Government intervened, and with a single decision changed the situation so completely that the Biro-Bidjan project presents now an experiment infinitely more interesting and replete with much greater possibilities than it ever was before. The change which so revolutionized the plan was the decision of the Soviet Government to open the door of Biro-Bidjan to Jewish workers from outside the Soviet Union. This decision was adopted last summer and met with an enthusiastic response from Jewish workers outside Russia. The general world depression, the raging unemployment with its resultant hardships and starvation everywhere, especially among the East-European Jewish workers, the rising wave of anti-Semitism and pogroms in Eastern and Central Europe, and the glamor which Soviet Russia holds now for millions of workers all over the world have combined to give the prospect an almost instantaneous success. The first experiment in recruiting foreign Jewish

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workers was completed last autumn in the small Baltic state of Lithuania, which has a population of only about 200,000 Jews. Within a period of six weeks 1,200 Jewish families applied to the Soviet Government to be sent to Biro-Bidjan, out of whom 340 were selected as suitable colonists and were sent. Six hundred more applicants from Belgium and thousands of other prospective candidates from practically every country in Europe had to be deferred until the spring, when foreign recruiting will be resumed. In a recent speech delivered at Minsk, M. Merezhin, who was then secretary of the Comzet (the Government Department for Settling Jews on the Land), stated that the Soviet Government is prepared to admit 12,000 Jews from other lands for settlement in Biro-Bidjan during 1932. This number does not include Jews from Poland, where enlistment has not yet been decided upon. Should a campaign similar to that in Lithuania be started in Poland, there would doubtless be found ten times 12,000 Jews ready to emigrate from there.

The system adopted by the Soviet Government in the settlement of the prospective Jewish republic in Biro-Bidjan is not the usual system of haphazard, individualistic capitalist immigration. Like Soviet industry and agriculture, Soviet immigration and colonization are strictly planned and directed by the state. The new Jewish settlers are engaged by the Soviet Government on the same principle as all other foreign workers are engaged for Russia, namely, on a contract to work for a definite length of time and at a fixed wage. The only important difference between these settlers and the other foreign workers who go to work in Russia is that these settlers become Soviet subjects as soon as they cross the Russian frontier. In other words, they are not to be visitors from abroad who come to Russia to work for a time, but settlers and immigrants who come to stay in the new country and to link their fate with it for good or ill. The method is, in fact, not unlike the system of Zionist labor (*Halutzim*) immigration into Palestine, except that the Soviets play the parts of both the British administration and the Zionist organization in Palestine at one and the same time. But there is no collection of funds, no haggling with the Colonial Office over certificates, no land ordinances prohibiting the buying of land even at exorbitant prices, no quarrel with Arabs, no pogroms and no animosity on the part of the natives, no controversy about the percentage of Jewish workers on government works. In a word, the Jewish National Home in Soviet Russia is being built without all those grave problems and tragedies which have confronted Zionism since the Balfour Declaration.

The recently recruited Jewish settlers from Lithuania, reinforced by some 80 more volunteer families from South America, the United States, and Germany and 940 families from Russia, are already at work in Biro-Bidjan. The foundation has been laid of a new communal city, "Icor," named after the American organization which is chiefly responsible for the propagation of the Biro-Bidjan project outside the Soviet Union. Two hundred houses, a school for 2,500 children, a communal house, a labor club, and a library are already in process of erection, and one of the most interesting social experiments—unique even for Soviet Russia—is being launched. At the end of the Five-Year Plan in 1933, 40,000 to 50,000 Jews are expected to live in Biro-Bidjan, and in accordance with the original Kalinin promise the district is then to be declared a Jewish republic.

Housing and Common Sense*

By CLARENCE S. STEIN

THERE is a fairy story about housing that all Americans like to believe. It tells us that any American of sound character and industrious habits can provide himself with "the house of his heart's desire." The picture of that fairy-story dwelling is exhibited in various forms in those home journals and other magazines that carry advertisements of all the mechanical gadgets which constitute the glory of that house. It has all the pretension of a great mansion and the picturesque cuteness of a little cottage. It is always displayed in a spacious garden, free of surrounding buildings, yet it is served by all the conveniences of modern urban civilization.

Now the hard facts are quite different from the fairy story. It is only the man with plenty of money who can have his house planned and built to meet his needs and can place it so as to secure quiet and privacy. Private enterprise does supply homes for this very limited part of the population. Housing for the well-to-do is a good business, but housing for two-thirds of our citizens is nobody's business. The cost of habitation is so disproportionate to their incomes that most people cannot afford new houses. They are forced to live in dwellings left over from another and different age, most of which are now far below American standards of decency and sanitation. And most of the houses built during the last ten years are no better than the old. They are little more than decorated wooden boxes crowded and shouldered by an army of other wooden boxes. They lack all the elementary needs of decent dwellings: sound construction, adequate sunlight, ventilation, privacy, and surroundings of natural green. They have no architectural sincerity; they are false and artificial settings for a moving-picture life. They ape the customs of a past age instead of meeting the needs of the present.

In spite of the unprecedented progress in all other great industries, the standard of house construction during the past decade has been lower than before the war. Progress there has been, but mainly in such mechanical accessories as bathroom, kitchen, and furnace fittings that are made and assembled in factories. The shell itself—that portion of the house that is put together by labor on the job—shows no technical progress. Problems of insulation against heat and cold and sound and of fire resistance have been generally left unsolved. Most of our houses are still made of wood in spite of the danger of fire and rapid deterioration. Compared with earlier periods, the construction has been slovenly—poor materials badly put together. A large part of it is

* The fifth of a series of articles on various important phases of our economic life. The sixth, The Control of Big Business, by Walton H. Hamilton, will appear in the issue of May 25.—Editor The Nation.

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the slipshod work of ignorant or irresponsible jerry-builders.

The quality of housing—and in part its cost—is due to the fact that the building industry is organized on a retail basis. Mass production we have in and near our large cities, where the greater part of the houses are produced by wholesale. But the antiquated methods of the days when houses were built one by one for individual owners persist. As a result, housing is our one large industry that has been practically unaffected by the great decade of industrial standardization and mechanization.

Most of the houses built during the last ten years were badly placed because they were planned to fit deep narrow lots rather than the needs of growing human beings who require sunlight and air and the sight of natural green. They have been placed without any regard to the best use of the site or the preservation of open spaces. Similar houses have been arranged in endless lines, like soldiers on parade. Miles of identical, free-standing houses, with no individuality and no privacy. Traditional systems of land subdivision, which bear no relation to actual use, like the typical municipal regulations, lead to the building of monotonous rows, and make it practically impossible to group houses so as to secure beauty or to obtain the maximum advantages of vista and privacy.

In the motor age our municipalities have continued to repeat highway and street layouts patterned for the days of the buggy. All the requirements of living have changed, but the framework of our cities remains the same. In fact, they are extended endlessly according to obsolete and wasteful methods in spite of the apparent need of new types of city planning to meet the requirements of the use of the automobile and the growing demand for peaceful escape from the dangers, noises, and odors of traffic highways.

Vast areas of land have been taken out of productive use for farming long before they were needed for housing. They have been subdivided into small lots and marketed by super-sales methods that add vastly to the cost of the land to the ultimate owner. More lots have been sold in these last ten years than can be used for decades—perhaps a century. Much of the land will lie useless for long periods while the owners' costs are inflated by payments for interest on investments, taxes, and assessments for roads and public utilities. Vast lengths of this expensive municipal equipment—highways, sewers, water supplies, as well as gas mains, telephones, and electric wires—are but partially used as one building after another is erected. The houses that are built fit badly in their narrow lots. But the mold of the future development of this portion of the city has been fixed by street layouts and subdivisions that are in great part already obsolete. Under our present procedure the pattern can be changed, the mold broken, only at vast expense and much labor by repurchase of individual lots.

Subdivisions have been located in accordance with the whim of the speculator rather than as required by a sound economic development of the community or the region of which they form a part. As a result, there is a chaotic relation between the location of industry and the home of workers. Municipalities have been put to vast expense—or more often have borrowed on the future—for transportation systems to connect the two.

A large part of the housing has been recklessly financed. The lending institutions hold the key position in the house-building industry. It is their loans that make construction possible. It is their final say which decides what houses shall be built. In short, they have been the real leaders in this chaotic industry. Loans have often been made without proper consideration of the quality of construction, the ability and integrity of the builder, the financial ability of the purchasers to meet all costs of upkeep, future assessments, and taxes, or the future character of the neighborhood as affecting the value of the house.

The causes of our past failures are not far to seek. Basically there are two. First, housing is carried on as speculation rather than investment. Second, housing is looked upon as purely a private affair rather than a public function. The American concept of building a house is a survival of the days when each man could provide his own home in his own way. In the pioneer days the individual could and did build his own home and supply its equipment on a purely individualistic basis. But with the development of the complications of modern urban life all this has changed. Much that we now consider essential to the house, such as good highways, sidewalks, water mains, sewers, telephones, gas and electricity, cannot be the individual's affair. It is a public matter, installed by the municipality or as a public utility. Parks, schools, transportation, and other facilities which make a neighborhood of houses desirable are also supplied at the expense of the city. The city's investment in housing is great. It cannot protect that investment under our present system of uncontrolled development of the city's growth for speculative gain.

The extravagant type of streets and utilities planned for the newer sections of our cities cannot be supported by those willing to occupy the cheap, free-standing houses with which these sections have been covered. Their cost must in part be borne by other parts of the city. The transportation lines and highways which feed these sections must also be subsidized. Meanwhile, streets, utilities, and the protection of the older blighted areas which have been in large part vacated in the outward growth of these same cities must also be carried at a loss. The uncontrolled growth of our urban regions is one of the factors that are leading all our big cities toward bankruptcy. It is its relation to their fiscal rather than to their social success or failure that will ultimately force our municipalities to accept housing as a public utility.

Although we think in terms of the pioneer—of the individual building his own house—the truth is that most dwellings are produced not for use but as speculation. This is the key to most of our housing difficulties. Houses are built to sell, and so it is mainly on the outward appearance rather than the essential structure that the builder's money is spent. He is not interested in supplying a need; he wants to make a profit. He would rather employ a clever salesman than a competent plumber, an honest carpenter, or an efficient architect. He puts very little real money into the operation. What he cannot borrow he owes to his subcontractors. He gets out as quickly as possible and moves on to speculate with the future development of some other section of the city.

Meanwhile, the house buyer who thought he had made an investment discovers he has gambled away his economic freedom. The fairy-story house he bought is only skin deep.

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The ownership of a home which according to the propaganda was to have made him a better citizen has merely robbed him of his freedom of movement. The "Own your own home" campaigns have encouraged many to buy who never should have done so—and never would have done so if they really had understood what they were getting into. The enormous number of foreclosures of mortgages in 1931 illustrates this point. The purchaser has been chained to a house that was ill fitted to his needs in the beginning, and was so badly built and so badly placed that it will be worthless long before the mortgages have been paid and the building really belongs to him. Deterioration of house or obsolescence of neighborhood wipes out his life's savings and one-quarter of his earnings for the better part of his working years. If houses were built as an investment instead of a speculation they would be constructed so that their structural life would be safe during the period in which the investment was being paid off. The neighborhood would be planned, built, and restricted so as to protect their value.

The speculative basis of housing is responsible not only for deterioration of buildings and neighborhood, but also for most of the wasteful and useless processes which make houses too expensive for most families. These include the waste of pyramiding land costs by premature land subdivision and sales; the waste in high-pressure salesmanship; the waste of partially used public improvements; the waste of bad planning; and the waste of small-scale construction methods. But the waste that costs the buyer or the renter of house or apartment most is that which comes from exorbitant charges for the use of money. It is because housing is a speculative business rather than a sound investment that its financing is so expensive. The actual annual costs for the use of money are generally in excess of 9 per cent. If the rate of financing were cut one-third, from 9 per cent to 6 per cent, rents could be cut about one-fifth.

Now if housing were a good and a safe investment, there would be no reason why the charges for the use of money should be higher than the market rates. There is no safer investment than a soundly constructed house in a properly planned and organized neighborhood. It is good for thirty years or more, and rental charges could be reduced not only by decreased rate of interest, but also by decreased amortization charges. Money at 4½ per cent instead of 9 per cent would mean that a four-room apartment that rents for $60 could be rented for $42.

It is apparent that the way to decent housing and communities and to economic housing is the same. If we could forget the fairy stories about housing and would use a little common sense, we would scrap most of our present housing methods and create new processes and new agencies. We would accept as a basis for our program of the future:

1. Housing as an investment rather than a speculation.
2. Housing as a public service rather than an individual function.

Such a realistic program for the future would presuppose:

1. *No more subdivisions of land* before actual planning and building of homes.
2. *No more planning or building of houses* as single, unrelated units within urban areas.
3. *No more construction* by irresponsible, unskilled, small-scale builders.

Now let me put a program for the future on a positive rather than a negative basis. In rough outline, it is this:

1. *Plan and build communities, not unrelated individual houses.* Plan every house as an integrated and related part of the whole town and more particularly of the neighborhood. The neighborhood should be the minimum unit of design. These communities should be created to meet the requirements of a new age—the age of the motor and increased leisure. They should be built spaciously around great parks. They should offer both the conveniences of this machine age and an escape from its nuisances and dangers.

2. *Build these neighborhood communities as a single operation or a series of related large-scale operations* under the guidance of trained technicians working as an organized group. Thus we can secure towns fitted not only to our modern needs but, what is quite as important, to our pocketbooks.

3. *Relate the location of these communities to the most desirable economic and social development of the city and region.* We shall thus secure better environment for living and a saner relation of housing to work and recreation places. At the same time we shall vastly decrease the cost of housing and particularly the accessory governmental costs of roads, utilities, and transportation. We may even escape municipal bankruptcy.

4. *Reorganize the house-building industry* as a modern and efficient large-scale industry.

5. *Put land for housing purposes under government control.* Thus do away with premature land subdivision and turn land directly from productive farm use to the maximum productive use for housing. Every farsighted municipality should purchase surrounding rural land and hold it out of use for housing until it is really needed—forever, if possible. It should also—for the social good of its citizens and its own economic salvation—take over the vast rotting or blighted areas both in the older sections and in those newer regions in which the cancerous signs of blight are beginning to appear. This will require a new type of condemnation law that will give the government a chance to take land on a fair basis of actual value.

6. *Finance housing on an investment instead of a speculative basis.* Large-scale operation would simplify housing financing and help to safeguard investments. It spreads the risks instead of concentrating them as do individual loans. Its scale and the homogeneous character it gives a neighborhood preserve the values for a much longer time than does our present method. Because the risk is decreased, loans on a larger percentage of value, longer periods of amortization, and a smaller return on money are possible. On the basis of a complete new set-up, substantial amounts of capital seeking permanent investment would be drawn into housing, for housing built according to the program outlined above would be one of the safest and soundest investments. It therefore should command money at the lowest market rate of interest. Its securities would market as readily as do the bonds of the Port Authority if each house-building operation had behind it the supervision and the approval of governmental agencies, such as the New York State Housing Board. As a result, instead of housing one-third of our population in the haphazard, wasteful, and unsatisfactory method of the past, it would be possible to produce on a sound business basis decent homes for perhaps two-thirds of our urban population.

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There will still remain a great many workers whose wages are too low to pay for new dwellings no matter how efficiently and economically they are produced. They must be housed not partially, as at present, but entirely, as a public service. In the past public-spirited citizens and foundations have attempted to care for the housing of the poor. Their work stands head and shoulders above most of the speculative developments. They have blazed the way in creating neighborhoods of permanent value as a result of unified planning, coordinated building, and sane regulations. Their investments have in most cases been safeguarded by the character of their work.

Housing for the lower income groups must become a direct governmental service—in my opinion a service far more important than the building of roads, utilities, transportation, even more important than schools. Why continue to dodge the problem? Inadequate incomes never will pay for adequate homes. We shall have decent communities for the vast mass of the population only when our cities—houses and all—are financed and built as public services. This means a vast amount of public credit for long terms and at low rates—rates as low as that at which the government can borrow, and even lower for the very poor. This does not necessarily mean an actual loss to the government. Certainly the loss to the city or State will not be so great as that which municipalities now suffer because of our present wasteful methods of city and housing development.

In the Driftway

A GENTLEMAN from Indiana—Mr. H. K. B., of South Bend, to be exact—writes to Heywood Broun of the New York *World-Telegram* for advice. Mr. B., it seems, wants to visit New York for the first time. He can stay there from Sunday noon to Thursday night; when his railroad fare and that of his wife are paid, they will have a hundred dollars left to see the town. How shall they do it? Mr. Broun, that inveterate and incurable New Yorker, tends to dodge the issue. He throws out a suggestion or two about the Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building, and some speakeasy or other. He mentions the George Washington Bridge by moonlight at 3 a. m. But in general he is vague and not very helpful. As a result, probably, of an impecunious childhood—which Mr. Broun never enjoyed—the Drifter has always been beguiled by mathematical problems of that sort. If Mr. and Mrs. H. K. B. ever see his advice, therefore, they may take it for what it is worth.

* * * * *

ONE hundred dollars, New York, and four and a half days: they make somehow an irresistible combination. Let us assume that Mr. B. from South Bend is a good bargainer; that he can go to one of the—almost—first-class hotels not far from the railroad station which will usher him into the metropolis and get a room and bath for two for $4 a day. That will take up $16 of his $100. Let him allot $24 for incidental expenses—taxis (for Mr. B., not for Mr. Broun!), the Empire State Building, rides on the bus, rides on the subway, ferry rides, and perhaps even a hansom cab from Central Park down Fifth Avenue to Washington Square (it used to cost $2.50, but maybe the price has been reduced in these depression days). This must also include newspapers and might even be squeezed to take in a couple of theater tickets at one of the cut-rate ticket agencies. Mr. B. will then have $60 left. Let him set aside $25. Of that we shall speak later. He must get his meals for four days out of the remaining $35. It goes without saying that the B.'s will never eat at their hotel. For breakfast they had better depend on a quarter spent at the nearest drug-store; for lunch they should be almost equally economical. After all, in New York one dines momentously! And since, by all reports, in South Bend the dinners are sumptuous and tempting to a degree, quantity or even quality of food is not so important as variety. New York is the place where one may dine à la nationality. French, German, Japanese, Italian, Syrian, Armenian, kosher, Mexican, Russian, and heaven knows how many other kinds of dinner at all hours of the night should enlighten the B.'s on how the rest of the world eats. At a restaurant where food of some other nation than England or the United States is served, the prices are not likely to be so high; the wine, if there is wine, is not quite so dear; the music is often excellent and strange; the patrons supply as much entertainment as does the food.

* * * * *

THERE remains the mysterious $25. This the B.'s may spend on Thursday night, and they may spend it in a way that is perhaps not peculiar to New York, but which is, shall we say, considered peculiar to New York in South Bend. They may dine at a speakeasy, and around midnight repair to a hotel to dance off the effects of their dinner. This frivolity will send them in high spirits to their train, and they will be fully prepared to answer in the negative the question of South Benders: "I hear New York is a swell place to visit, but I guess you wouldn't want to live there, would you?" The Drifter would hasten to assure the B.'s that many persons in New York would consider $25 an insufficient sum with which to enter a speakeasy and expect to leave it alive. But it can be done. One must dine not too well and must drink not too many synthetic cocktails at a dollar apiece. But in the course of the evening one learns a good deal about one of the more celebrated phases of New York life. And if the B.'s pick out the right place, they might even run into Mr. Broun.

THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

Eggs: Six Cents a Dozen

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Last winter I canceled my subscription to *The Nation*, and I have just received your letter urging me to renew. I would gladly do so if I were financially able to do so. I am a farmer owning 120 acres of land and am entirely out of debt. This is the first year since I bought the place in 1904 that I have not been able to pay my taxes when due. This is a grain, alfalfa, and fruit country, and I do not know a farmer in the country that has paid the first half of his taxes due March 1. There no doubt are some but none that I know. Banks will not loan even for taxes, and farming has not paid expenses for

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three years. Apples last fall did not pay cost of picking, to say nothing of cost of growing them. Dairy cows don't pay cost of the feed. Eggs down to six cents a dozen; some stores refuse to buy them. Glad to see one paper that will face facts and tell the truth. But I can't help you out.

Lazear, Colo., April 19 P. P. SLACK

Internationalism

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: The American press has apparently ignored a recent meeting of the League of Human Rights. The following statement by a French delegate, Mme Marcelle Capy, should not go unnoticed:

> The German Krupp needed nickel and it was furnished by the French nickel syndicate; it was shipped from New Caledonia to Norway and then to Germany. Copper was handled similarly, with participation of the English firm, Vickers. Again, Krupp sold to Vickers a patented fuse, and the British fleet at Skagerrack used optical instruments supplied by German firms during the war. In their Newski works, the Austrian Skoda Works manufactured cannons for Russia. French and British soldiers could die at the Dardanelles with the consolation that arms and munitions manufactured in their own countries brought them a hero's death, for Vickers had supplied the Turk plentifully. During the war, as the French deputy, Chouffet, reported in the Chamber, the Conference of Explosives Manufacturers of all warring countries worked harmoniously in Switzerland. For many months entire trainloads of chemicals were shipped from southern France to Switzerland, to be returned to France later in the form of phosgene gas for the killing of French soldiers. In January, 1915, 200,000 kilograms of cyanide were shipped from France to Germany. On the other hand, the barbed wire in which thousands of Germans died before Fort Douaumont was furnished one month before the attack by a German firm.

Indianapolis, April 10 H. STEICHMANN

Progress in Education

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Flounder as we may in the field of economics, have you noted what strides we are making in the technique of education? The latest is the invention by a genius of the University of Chicago of what we may call a soul-meter. The pupil whose soul is to be exposed reads a sentence thrown on the screen before him, and as he moves his eyes from left to right, an electrical contrivance records the movements—many short jerks for a slow, painful reader, one swift glide for a really bright boy. The child speaks, and electric lights flash and record the quality of his voice. But that is not all. The child girds on a strange belt and looks at a painting or listens to music, whereupon his innermost emotions are displayed before his own eyes and those of his teacher. In short, the human being is mentally vivisected. Is this not marvelous?

I have often visited a post-war school in Germany which grew rapidly from 250 children of workers to more than 1,200 from all classes of society; and I brought away with me an indelible impression of a development in just the opposite direction from that of the robot technique. In the Waldorf School all of the sixty and more teachers are expected to retain eyes, ears, minds, and even souls of their own. They are discouraged from leaning upon any contrivances of metal, activated by the subhuman forces of electricity, to discover the shy secrets of a child's heart. It is their primary function to divine these secrets. They do not ask a machine to record the pulse-beat and breathing rhythm when a boy looks at a picture. On the contrary, they supply the child with water colors, and from his choice and use of shades in painting pictures for himself they discern the temperament of the evolving being. I have a feeling of confidence that this is really the way into the future, the road leading to the free individual man and woman, while the machine substitute for the teacher looks toward the extinction of personality.

New York, April 19 OLIN D. WANNAMAKER

Berkeley, California, Readers

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Response from *Nation* readers to a letter printed last December resulted in the formation of a study group here. At our last meeting, incidentally, Miss Josephine Roche, of the Rocky Mountain Coal Company in Colorado, told us, and everyone on the University of California campus, of that unique experiment of hers in cooperative mining. We should like to widen our circle. There are no "dues" or obligations of any sort except an interest in honest study of economics. Full information may be obtained by writing the undersigned at 1109 Sterling Avenue.

Berkeley, Cal., April 9 THE WORKING COMMITTEE

For Ohio Readers of *The Nation*

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Any readers of *The Nation* resident in Ohio who favor the Four-Year Presidential Program of the League for Independent Political Action, as published in *The Nation* of February 17, and who desire to cooperate in the formation of an active chapter of the League in Ohio, are asked to communicate with E. M. Davidove, 1812 Guarantee Title Building, Cleveland, Ohio.

Cleveland, March 24 WM. W. BIDDLE

Contributors to This Issue

LESLIE F. CROSS is a Milwaukee newspaperman who has contributed to various periodicals.

PAUL Y. ANDERSON is the national correspondent of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*.

WILLIAM ZUKERMAN is a London journalist and manager of the European bureau of the New York *Jewish Morning Journal*.

CLARENCE S. STEIN, a New York architect, was formerly chairman of the Commission of Housing and Regional Planning of New York State.

BABETTE DEUTSCH is the author of several volumes of verse, the latest of which is "Honey out of the Rock."

NATHANIEL PEFFER is the author of "The White Man's Dilemma" and "China: The Collapse of a Civilization."

CLIFTON FADIMAN is head of the editorial department of Simon and Schuster.

RAY C. B. BROWN was for many years managing editor of *Musical America*.

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Finance

"Steel" Pays No Dividend

OMISSION of the dividend on the common stock of the United States Steel Corporation, for the first time since 1915, is another reminder of the severity of the business depression. Last year the company reported a deficit of $6,303,519 before inclusion of certain non-recurring income, and a final deficit, after payment of dividends, of $49,945,567. In the first three months of this year it failed to cover its operating expenses by $1,136,607 and revealed a deficit of $13,218,549 after paying fixed charges and providing for depreciation and depletion reserves. Last September the annual dividend rate was reduced from $7 to $4 a share, and in the following January from $4 to $2; even this curtailed payment has now been omitted. There are 174,507 owners of the company's 8,687,435 common shares.

A change in the Steel Corporation's common dividend is always a matter of more than casual interest, for the company still stands, in spite of the rise of General Motors to unparalleled size, as the premier industrial organization of America. Its earnings are looked upon as barometric, and its financial policies are widely regarded as setting a standard of corporation practice. Those policies have been conservative. It was only in two years, during the height of the war-time prosperity, that the company paid out more than $7 a share ($11.75 extra in 1917 and $11 extra in 1918). Refusing to yield to the mania for splitting its shares three, four, or five for one, as other concerns were doing, the company confined itself to paying a 40 per cent dividend in stock in 1927, when its shares were selling in the neighborhood of $170; it was not until two years later that the market placed the fantastic valuation of $261.75 a share on this increased amount of capital stock. The management in 1929 shrewdly accommodated the public, which had an insatiable craving for common stocks, by selling more than a million new shares at $140 each and using the proceeds to retire bonded debt. The reduction in sinking-fund and interest requirements thereby effected stands the company in good stead today.

Yet in spite of these farseeing moves, United States Steel has not been able to maintain its common dividends. A stockholder at the recent annual meeting rose to protest the reduction which had taken place up to that time, and moved that the rate be moved back to $7 as speedily as possible, presenting a combination of balance-sheet figures to prove that the company had $1,200,000,000 of undistributed net profits, and that net income in 1931, before depreciation and depletion, totaled $65,000,000—enough to pay $4 in dividends on the common. The motion was promptly voted down; but the stockholder succeeded in bringing into the foreground the fact that the Steel Corporation's policy of reinvesting enormous amounts of its earnings in plant and equipment, even though this expansion does not result in enlargement of bonded debt or share capital, provides no bulwark against a depression such as now exists.

In the period from 1912 to 1925 the book value of Steel common rose from approximately $140 to $280 a share; from 1921 to 1930 the increase was only from $261 to $290. In the earlier period the average annual earnings a share were $15.90, while in the latter they were $8.39. Even during the 1912-25 period of larger earnings, dividend payments averaged only $6.77. If the country's industrial activity falls to a slower tempo in the future, as seems likely, we may see a marked alteration in the Steel Corporation's policy of reinvesting heavily in plant; which will not necessarily mean smaller returns for the stockholder.

S. Palmer Harman

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Books, Drama, Films

To a Friend Who Fears Revolution

By BABETTE DEUTSCH

The fragile penates are threatened, the porcelain, the blown
Glass, and the box of sweet sounds, and satiny woods,
Lares lovingly wrought, worshiped as gods and goods,
These may be ravished, dismembered, overthrown!
And these gone, what goes too? The hearth is shaken
By no violence native to earth or air,
But by the mob, the arch-Goth, that cannot care
For an image smashed, an idolatrous heart forsaken.
These propped, these sheltered you, powerful though frail
These magnified your house, miraculously
Extended time. Are they endangered? You see
Life shrink, peace fly, animal strength prevail.
Secure them now, who have so well defended
You, saved you: themselves they cannot save.
Seal doors, keep close, nor listen. Without a grave,
Justice lies crying for burial unattended.

The Graces, the Graces!

The Letters of Philip Dormer Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield. Edited, with an Introduction, by Bonamy Dobrée. The Viking Press. Edition limited to 900 copies. Six volumes. $50 the set.

THE present handsome edition is the most complete record of Lord Chesterfield's letters in existence. The editor assures us that every letter already printed either in prior collections of Chesterfield's letters or in various other publications has been included and printed in full; while the edition also includes, either in full or in *précis,* some fourteen hundred "business" letters never before printed. The great majority of them are "office" letters, but many are private letters of a political nature. While these may be interesting and useful to the professional historian, however, and while they serve to remind us how large a part of Chesterfield's time was absorbed by the technical details of political life, they throw no new essential light on his mind and character.

That character is peculiarly fixed. Chesterfield himself created it; it was a work of art, and it was his masterpiece. In the eyes of posterity he has become, as a result, the archetype of all such characters, and the symbol of a certain philosophy of life. He was, indeed, far more successful with his character than with his career. The first he could form; the second was badly battered, here and there, as the result of slight miscalculations, and almost foundered by some singularly ironic strokes of sheer ill-luck. True, Chesterfield got off to a good start: not everyone inherits an earldom. He did, in time, come to play a distinguished part in national affairs: he was successful as ambassador to The Hague; for a time he was the acknowledged leader in the House of Lords of the government opposition; he was instrumental in the historic process of strengthening the power of the cabinet against that of the king; he became Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, and during the short time he occupied that post, his enlightened administration made him perhaps the most popular viceroy Ireland ever had; finally, he enjoyed a few years as Secretary of State. But though he developed beyond any of his contemporaries the arts of pleasing and charming, he never seemed quite to please or charm those few persons who could have been of most use to him. On the contrary, he seemed to have a genius for irritating them. He sought promotion for himself and his friends by cultivating the King's mistress, and merely succeeded thereby in arousing the hearty animosity of the Queen. He rubbed Walpole the wrong way, and made an almost permanent enemy of George II. There was nothing he was prouder of than his oratory, but he was discouraged in the House of Commons by a member who mimicked him cruelly; his polished manners and delicate sarcasm were more suited to the House of Lords, but even here his speeches were more admired than effective. Friend and foe came to hear them, as Mr. Dobrée remarks, "not as utterances connected with practical affairs, but as performances of dazzling virtuosity."

The same fate awaited the letters to his illegitimate son. Originally they were written with one chief purpose—to make that son a polished man of the world. "The Graces, the Graces," he kept writing; "remember the Graces!" But the son grew up to be a dull fellow, honest and industrious and quiet enough, and as devoid of the graces, when his education is considered, as it is possible to imagine. Again and again Chesterfield coached him in the art and importance of public speaking; he fairly pushed him into Parliament; but his maiden speech there was deplorable; he got stage fright, and had to consult his notes. Chesterfield, again, kept reiterating that if his son had amours, they should be with women of fashion, and not sordid. He even encouraged his son once or twice to these affairs, in the desperate hope that they would supply him with the imperative graces; he urged his son to make him his friend and confidant in such matters. But Chesterfield was to learn, after his death, that he had been secretly married to a woman of humble origin, and had had two sons by her.

Finally, most unfortunate of all for Chesterfield's reputation with posterity, was his casual encounter with Samuel Johnson, which brought down upon him perhaps the most completely crushing letter ever written, that famous letter which rises to the withering question: "Is not a Patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help?" Yet, so far as the truth about the actual facts can be learned, Chesterfield had been guilty of little more than thoughtlessness. Johnson had sent Chesterfield a prospectus of his "Dictionary" when the latter was Secretary of State, and Chesterfield had sent him a subscription of £10. Then, apparently, the episode had gone completely out of his mind—not remarkable when one is a busy Secretary of State—and he does not seem to have thought of it again until the dictionary was about to appear, when he wrote several articles in high praise of it in the *World.* These gave Johnson his opportunity. He sent two other shafts in his Lordship's direction, both of which stuck. "This man," he said, "I thought had been a Lord among wits; but, I find, he is only a wit among Lords!" And when the "Letters" were published, he added that "they teach the morals of a whore, and the manners of a dancing-master.

But the criticism tells more about Johnson than it does about Chesterfield. It should no longer be necessary, at this late date, to defend Chesterfield from the charge of "immorality." He is seen in his true light as essentially what Sainte-Beuve called him, the English La Rochefoucauld. His "immorality" is for the most part merely common sense, shrewdness, and absence of cant. As Logan Pearsall Smith has said so admirably, "That we should practice what we preach is generally admitted; but anyone who preaches what he and his hearers practice must incur the gravest moral disapprobation."

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That was the fate of Chesterfield. But though his philosophy as expressed in his letters to his son often seems coldly self-calculating, his own political career, especially for the times in which he lived, was singularly honorable. True, his emphasis on mere manners was excessive, and may sometimes even have verged on the ridiculous; but he was in the habit of thinking of manners as an integral part of morals, and it is only fair to point out that standards for manners seem on the whole more permanent, if anything, than standards for morals. Chesterfield's tone and attitude, at all events, are far less alien to the modern reader than Johnson's. To be sure, again, his emphasis on the graces was, as it would now be fashionable to point out, the expression of a leisure-class ideal; but this is almost too obvious for statement. What is much more important to remember is that the kind of urbanity he inculcated would be a most desirable, even an indispensable, ingredient of a genuinely good life even in a classless society.

Chesterfield, in brief, gave the supreme expression in English to a view of life that in some respects must be permanently valid. And from seemingly unpromising materials (his head was too big, his body too small; he kept his upper lip drawn down to hide stains on his teeth, and his voice was harsh and croaking) he nevertheless succeeded in creating a character that has stood as a model for charm and good manners for generations. He could not quite make an art of life because life was full of jolts and beyond his control; but he could make an art of the way he met those jolts: he was serene, amiable, and courtly to the last. On the day of his death, as he was nearing his final gasp, his friend Dayrolles came to see him. "Give Dayrolles a chair," he said; and they were his last words. "Is it not charming," Horace Walpole once asked, "to be so agreeable quite to the door of one's coffin?"

HENRY HAZLITT

The Mercurial Sun Yat-sen

Sun Yat-sen Versus Communism. By Maurice William. Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins Company. $5.

THIS is a curious historical fragment. Its thesis is that a little-known book by the author induced Sun Yat-sen publicly to reject communism a few months after he had publicly espoused it, thus diverting China from communism and saving it for democracy. Half the case is made out. Mr. William gives a hundred pages of quotations in parallel columns from his own work, "The Social Interpretation of History," and "The San Min Chu I, or Three Principles of the People," a printed version of the lectures which embodies Dr. Sun Yat-sen's valedictory gospel. From these quotations it is patent that Dr. Sun not only based his ideas on Mr. William's book but in places took over even his phraseology. In the first of the lectures Dr. Sun seems to have advocated the class war. In the last he renounces it. In the interval of four months he had read Mr. William's book; he refers to Mr. William, in fact. The conclusion is obvious.

The point is naturally of absorbing interest to Mr. William but of very little importance to anybody else. It would be historically important if the San Min Chu I had had any enduring influence on Chinese life and if Dr. Sun's change of mind on communism had had any influence on his followers. Neither is true. Dr. Sun concluded the San Min Chu I lectures in April, 1924. But it was only after that date that the Communists acquired any real strength in China—in other words, after Dr. Sun renounced communism. And China did not break with the Russians until 1927, and then for reasons having little to do with Communist philosophy. The Chinese nationalists resented Soviet Russia's attempt to dominate. And the San Min Chu I has never had any real influence in China except for propaganda purposes. The title was accorded lip service; the beliefs were ignored. They had to be. As a social and economic philosophy they can be described only as chop suey. Not only on the question of communism are they mutually exclusive. Now even the lip service is dying out.

Mr. William's thesis reveals more of Sun Yat-sen's personality than of China's history. He was a great leader, a man of lofty character, noble purposes, and high ideals—one of the great men of our times. But he never attained intellectual maturity, and he was completely devoid of the faculty of reason. He functioned mentally in sporadic hunches. It was typical of him that he met Joffe, read the Communist Manifesto, and turned Communist, and then read one book by an American of whom he knew nothing and rejected communism all in a few months. Because of his magnetism and his qualities of character he established his leadership over the new generation in China; because of his intellectual limitations he led the revolution on tortuous courses ending in blind alleys, with needless human suffering on the way. Mr. William's point is well made, but it is not one to make with unmeasured satisfaction.

NATHANIEL PEFFER

Short Stories—Mostly Bad

Twenty Best Short Stories in Ray Long's Twenty Years as an Editor. Ray Long and Richard R. Smith. $3.

Blueberry Pie. By Thyra Samter Winslow. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

Nixey's Harlequin. By A. E. Coppard. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

The Intercessor and Other Stories. By May Sinclair. The Macmillan Company. $1.50.

Limits and Renewals. By Rudyard Kipling. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.50.

> I felt that I was an average American, with the reading taste of the average American. That any reading which entertained, or instructed, or thrilled me would entertain or instruct or thrill enough other average Americans to produce circulation in sufficient quantity to enable the magazine to sell advertising profitably.—*Ray ("An Editor Looks at Russia") Long.*

THE philosophy of the American popular magazine has never been stated more frankly, or in less elegant English. Students of American journalism will do well to ponder Mr. Long's compilation. Among his particular literary heroes are Albert Payson Terhune, Rupert Hughes ("thoroughly an artist at heart," says Mr. Long), Irvin S. Cobb, Fannie Hurst, James Oliver Curwood, Ellis Parker Butler, Booth Tarkington, Peter B. Kyne, and Edna Ferber. He also reprints one of Somerset Maugham's pot-boilers—the sort of thing Mr. Maugham writes in order to chuckle at the people who fall for it—with the pronouncement: "I think it fair to say that he is the most expert in the use of English of any writer of our time." (*Fair,* Mr. Long? Tut, tut. Generous!)

Inasmuch as Mr. Long proclaims himself the Average American, we should not expect his "twenty best short stories" to be any good. We are not disappointed. The Average American comes through nobly: it would be hard to name five stories by noted authors which are quite as irretrievably bad as, let us say, Fannie Hurst's Guilty, Rupert Hughes's The Rented Body, Peter B. Kyne's One-eighth Apache, Booth Tarkington's Cider of Normandy, and James Oliver Curwood's Kazan. On the other hand, our confidence in the Average American wavers a bit when we read Laurence Stallings's Vale of Tears, Dorothy

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Parker's Here We Are! and Ring Lardner's Who Dealt? If not very good tales, these three are at least readable. But what is one to do when one notes that Mr. Long actually includes a first-rate story—Fifty Grand by Ernest Hemingway—in his collection? Yet things are not as bad as they seem—it appears that Mr. Long *turned down* this story, only to admire it after Ellery Sedgwick had published it in the *Atlantic Monthly*. However, Mr. Sedgwick, deplorably enough, is not an Average American.

Of Thyra Samter Winslow's latest collection of magazine-marketed trifles there is very little one can say. They represent no improvement over her first volume, published seven or eight years ago. She has a shrewd eye for the minor tragedies and tragi-comedies of lower middle-class folk, small-town girls, drummers, and vaudeville troupers. Whatever irony lies on the surface of their petty successes and frustrations she captures cleverly enough; but as the irony resides not in the make-up of her own mind but in each individual story-situation itself, her art is flat and insignificant. It is only when she steps out of her own role, however, and—as in the title story—attempts to reproduce Fannie Hurst's peculiar fire-alarm-and-triple-scare-head-shriek, that she becomes downright unreadable.

To turn from Mrs. Winslow to A. E. Coppard is to turn from a precise and superficial observer to a genuine personality. Any one of a gross of assorted American writers might have signed "Blueberry Pie." But only Coppard can write Coppard's poetic and seemingly casual tales, which at their most fanciful are tinctured with the bitter-sweet of deep truth. It is only fair to admit that the present volume shows a falling away from his previous high standard. Nothing in "Nixey's Harlequin" is half so fine as Dusky Ruth or Marching to Zion or half a dozen other masterpieces that come readily to mind. Occasionally, too, a slick note creeps in, as if the author were trying a little too obviously to show his skill. But, after all, everything Coppard writes is worth reading. No student of the English short story can afford to neglect one of his books. Even if he should publish not another line, his position in the literature of his country is secure.

Miss Sinclair's stories will appeal to a very special class, consisting probably of a small group of highly literary ladies given to polite adventuring in the Behind the Beyond. With a skill one would like to see applied to more corporeal subject matter, Miss Sinclair continues that rather *fanée* tradition established by Poe and E. T. A. Hoffmann and carried on in our own day by Algernon Blackwood and Arthur Machen. The trouble with Miss Sinclair's ghosts and night noises and haunted houses and karma-like chains of coincidence and dreamy-eyed Swamis is simply that (evidently) she believes in them. If she didn't (Poe didn't), her stories might be convincing. Since the advent of the New Physicists rationalism is of course unfashionable; nevertheless the present stick-in-the-mud reviewer admits unblushingly that he read "The Intercessor and Other Stories" without a single shiver.

But while he could only blink dumbly at these ectoplasmic emanations from the woman who once wrote "Mr. Waddington of Wyck," he was dumfounded, floored, taken aback, and generally paralyzed by Mr. Kipling's "Limits and Renewals." We are told that this is Kipling's first book of new stories in ten years. If it were only true! If the stories only *were* "new." But they are old, old—old as the Hills he wrote so well about thirty long years ago. Now, in the year of grace 1932, the old man who once wrote "Kim" is still saving the Empire; still jiggling the strings attached to his Eton schoolboys dressed up as adult males; still reinterpreting Rome and the Bible in terms of the white man's burden; still recalling the good old War as a stern but glorious game.

And the style is more Kiplingese than ever, more esoterically allusive than ever. His men still employ a kind of ritualistic gibble-gabble when they talk, in order to make it clear to the reader that they belong to a special caste from which he, poor fellow, is debarred. The dialogue bears a close resemblance to the kind of lingo invented for the initiation ceremonies of the United and Protective Benevolent Order of African Exalted Grand Llamas. In brief, these stories are as unreadable, as irritating, and as anachronistic as today's *Times* editorial page. If one could only go to the trouble of finding out what they are about, one would no doubt discover that they are enormously clever—but why bother? The man who writes them may once have been a genius; but of that genius only his prejudices, his crotchets, and his affectations remain. . . . And yet this pitiful book is the work of a man who thirty years ago wrote The Story of the Gadsbys, and Baa Baa Black Sheep, and The Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes, and The City of Dreadful Night, and On Greenhow Hill, and Without Benefit of Clergy, and The Man Who Would Be King, and The Incarnation of Krishna Mulvaney. . . .

Hats off! A corpse is passing by.

CLIFTON FADIMAN

Wagner's Stanchest Friend

The Letters of Richard Wagner to Anton Pusinelli. Translated and Edited with Critical Notes by Elbert Lenrow. Alfred A. Knopf. $5.

OF all the friendships formed by Richard Wagner, the most steadfast and unbroken by any alienation of understanding or sympathy was the one between himself and Carl Franz Anton Pusinelli, a distinguished and esteemed physician of Dresden. The two became acquainted in 1842, when Wagner was rehearsing the Dresden Liedertafel of which Pusinelli was a member, and the bond was dissolved only by the physician's death in 1878. Unperturbed by those idiosyncrasies of character which caused temporary rifts in other of the composer's attachments, Pusinelli so revered the genius that he accepted the man as he was. This unquestioning deference was exactly the attitude to evoke from Wagner the best of his attributes, and his letters to this faithful friend reveal not only a profound sense of gratitude and a positive affection, but also a frankness in striking contrast to his concealments and self-justifications in other quarters, particularly in his autobiography.

A portion of this correspondence has been previously published in German with omissions and suppressions characteristic of the editing to which the majority of Wagnerian documents were subjected prior to the deaths of Cosima and Siegfried. The value of Mr. Lenrow's edition primarily resides in the fact that his is the first publication in any language of the complete text. Wagner wrote seventy-two letters and ten telegrams to Anton Pusinelli and two letters to his widow. Of these only eighteen have hitherto appeared intact in print; twenty-one were published with sentences and even entire paragraphs left out, and forty-five were wholly suppressed. Mr. Lenrow has restored all the missing material, and has linked the letters together with narrative and commentary in so deft and scholarly a manner that the book has sound merits as critical biography.

How heavily Wagner drew upon Pusinelli's loyal devotion is now fully disclosed. It was Pusinelli who always stood handy with loans of ready cash, who shouldered virtually all the responsibility for Wagner's disastrous venture in publishing his early operas, who acted as intermediary between Richard and Minna after their total estrangement, who refuted in the public press the slander that Minna had been obliged to apply for municipal relief because of Richard's failure to pay her allowance. Literally true were the words Wagner penned in his last note

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of the correspondence: "I look back over my years, and there, again and again, I encounter the most friendly man who ever found his way to me."

No shelf of Wagneriana is complete without this book. The letters are of the utmost importance to everyone interested (and what musically inclined person is not?) in the complexities of Wagner's character, for they contain the most candid lines he ever wrote about himself with absolute trust in the discretion of the man addressed. They throw clear light upon many a point left obscure in the official pages of Glasenapp as well as in "Mein Leben," which Mr. Lenrow terms "the most disconcerting autobiography ever left to posterity by a serious artist."

RAY C. B. BROWN

Books in Brief

Letters of Jane Welsh Carlyle to Joseph Neuberg, 1848-1862. Edited with Introduction and Notes by Townsend Scudder. Oxford University Press. $3.

Here are twenty-seven carefully edited and annotated letters of Jane Welsh Carlyle which will make an interesting addition to her already voluminous correspondence, offering as they do not only further confirmation of various stimulating traits of her own character, but sidelights on certain events which her letters to her husband present in rather a different aspect.

The Autobiography of An Adventurer. By J. L. Trebitsch-Lincoln. Translated from the German by Emile Burns. Henry Holt and Company. $2.50.

If the reader could feel that he was being told the whole truth, so help the author, God, he would find this book interesting. But M. Trebitsch-Lincoln is as shifty in authorship as he was in his international spying and plotting. Consequently this story of a Hungarian Jew who became an Episcopalian priest, a British M. P., an oil magnate, a counter-revolutionist in three countries, an international spy, adviser to a Chinese general, and finally a Buddhist monk, promises much in outline, but is a frustrated tale in telling. If any value can be ascribed to the book at all, it is in the fresh revelation of the gullibility and petty, sometimes criminal, aspirations of the great men of affairs.

The Story of Medicine. By Victor Robinson. Albert and Charles Boni. $5.

The keynote of this excellent book is expressed in the following quotation: "The most hopeful aspect of modern science is the victory of the experimental method over the assumptions of authority." Dr. Robinson takes as his criteria of the progress of medicine the liberation of thought and action from the bondage of church, pedantry, and charlatanism. The more palpable later achievements in surgery, pharmacology, and physiology are the natural sequelae of this freedom.

Bantry Bay. Ireland in the Days of Napoleon and Wolfe Tone. By P. Brenan Bradley. London: Williams and Norgate. 10s 6d.

Mr. Bradley has brought together in this book studies of four efforts of the French and Dutch to invade Ireland—Hoche's expedition to Bantry Bay, De Winter's defeat at Camperdown, the actual invasion at Killala by General Humbert, and Sir John Warren's defeat of General Hardy's expedition off the north coast of Ireland—together with a valuable estimate of Wolfe Tone, the inciter of these efforts to free Ireland from English control. Mr. Bradley is of the opinion that bad weather alone was responsible for the French and Dutch failures, notably at Bantry Bay, where, after safely arriving, the bulk of the invading fleet was driven out to sea and dispersed by furious gales. That French governmental inefficiency contributed largely to the disasters is also true, but the elements were clearly on the side of the English. Had Hoche succeeded in landing his entire force at Bantry in 1796, it is in Mr. Bradley's opinion highly possible that "he would have conquered the country and brought about in Ireland as complete a revolution as that brought about by William of Orange in England in the previous century." Mr. Bradley's attitude is distinctly pro-Irish and not pro-British. He goes out of his way to say, in writing of Wolfe Tone, that no sincere Irishman today will cherish a connection between the two countries if it is based "on the servile and false notion that Ireland is not a nation," and he demands for the Ireland of today what Wolfe Tone championed—a truly national government and that alone.

Makers of Modern Italy: Napoleon to Mussolini. By Sir J. A. R. Marriott. Oxford University Press. $3.50.

Napoleon, by his preparations to unite Italy into a kingdom hereditary under a Napoleonic dynasty, precipitated the national consciousness which in due course produced Mazzini, Cavour, Garibaldi, and Victor Emmanuel. Mazzini was the orator, Garibaldi the warrior, and Cavour the politician who managed that the jealousies of the great Powers should be turned at last to the advantage of Italy. It was the last process that won unity and liberty, but without Mazzini and Garibaldi there would have been nothing in Italy worth liberating. It is an interesting story, revealing incidentally the mean and stupid and criminal cunning which accompanies the high-scale robbery called empire. The author's fondness for it, his cheerful acquiescence to what he considers "realistic" politics give an unpalatable flavor to a book that otherwise has the virtue of directness, concision, and readability.

Jonathan Edwards. By Arthur Cushman McGiffert, Jr. Harper and Brothers. $2.50.

A professor of theology at the Chicago Theological Seminary summarizes Edwards's life and analyzes in detail his more important writings. He has consulted all the available material, including some that is unpublished, but has not discovered much that was unknown to previous biographers. He says little about Edwards's environment, the sources of his doctrines, and his influence and importance; the description of his theology is thorough and reliable but in no way original. He tries to be vivid and conversational, but does not succeed in making Edwards an interesting individual. For students of theology this book will not supersede Allen. A definitive examination of Edwards's place in the history of thought remains to be written.

Architecture

Housing by "Large-Scale Operations"

RUBE GOLDBERG'S fancy mechanical inventions? They do not amount to so much. If you want to see machinery so complicated that cannon and turbines are required for the purpose of tying a shoelace, and all in real life, study what is known as the "building industry."

Here is the situation: Roughly two-thirds of the people of the United States are badly in need of a decent shelter. I am speaking not of a private house, but just of shelter—some-

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thing watertight overhead and alongside, which will still let in sufficient light and fresh air, something dry and clean underfoot, the whole inclosure comfortable enough to rate as a "decent home." But this minimum, for the bulk of the population, does not exist.

The building industry knows it; so it builds, on a Westchester estate, a sumptuous millionaire's country residence. He pays for it. After that the "industry" comes to Park Avenue and builds, for the same millionaire and his friends, a city apartment. They pay for it, still handsomely. The banks are happy, the real-estate men are happy, the architects are happy, so are the materials men and union labor. All is going well. The benefits can now spread. If you can get enough people to live on Riverside Drive or, to make the story short, in the Bronx, crowded into the same kind of apartment (though just a little cheaper and smaller), they will pay the rent. The land is bought, the money borrowed, the mills turn out the steel, the masons set brick. The people move in, and, although this is something they cannot afford to buy, they pay rent, quite handsomely. Now comes the crux. Enthusiasm has run so high that this stage of the process is rapidly carried to an extreme. It has to be, for the sake of the ultimate purpose in view. It is necessary to build too many apartments, and too many Flatbush own-your-own homes for this third of the people that earns more than $2,000 a year—the third that is *not* the worst in need of shelter. The result is that there are not enough of these people any longer to pay. The manager has vacancies. The owner tells the banker he hardly knows how to meet the mortgage. The banker, who has been lending most liberally, holds tight. "Whatever you do," he declares, not calmly at all, "no more high-class apartments!" The owner says, "I will reduce the rents, and perhaps some of the people who really need shelter will move in." But the banker will tolerate no such false prophecy. By no such short cuts is the end to be reached. The banker is wiser. He sees that the value of the mortgages must be maintained on the books. Here the process becomes a little blurred and difficult, because the devil himself has to be fought a little. But trust the banks.

But do not forget the man who for some time has been standing quietly to one side, idle—the builder. Having nothing to do is something he does not like, since building is a business that presumes action. He confers with the banker and emerges smiling very blandly, more blandly than he feels. The bank will lend on a class of construction that cannot compete with that which it is now "pegging." Profits will not be so high, and joy does not abound, but you have to do *something*. . . . And thus it comes that the builder is induced to make something for the *upper* half of the shelterless two-thirds.

So the builder sharpens his pencil. He tells his architect what to omit in the way of gables, breakfast nooks, and superrefrigerators. He also finds, on the positive side, how much cheaper it is to proceed if his units are all alike and plenty of them are made at a time. And the banks unite, in certain cases, to exert, by virtue of the I. O. U.'s they hold, enough pressure to keep individual owners of lots from holding out against the necessary assembling of whole blocks at a time. The entire process, with further ramifications not mentioned here, is entitled "large-scale operations."

And here we had better leave it, noting the remarkable event that a leader among builders, Mr. Eken, has appeared before an audience made up largely of social workers and spoken in behalf of shelter for the middle third. It is true that we have not arrived at the bottom yet, but we are certainly on the way. And to describe the coming transition from operations of the kind I have been picturing, carried on on a "large scale," to operations of a new kind, strictly *industrial* and amply capable of housing us all, would require . . . well, I'm no Karl Marx.

DOUGLAS HASKELL

Archibald MacLeish

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Merry-Go-Round—Avon—W. 45 St.

Of Thee I Sing—Music Box—W. 45 St.

Reunion in Vienna—Martin Beck—45 St. & 8 Ave.

Riddle Me This—John Golden—W. 58 St.

Springtime for Henry—Shubert—W. 44 St.

The Animal Kingdom—Empire—B'way. & 40 St.

The Cat and the Fiddle—Globe—B'way. & 46 St.

The Laugh Parade—Imperial—W. 45 St.

There's Always Juliet—Henry Miller's 124 W. 43 St.

The Truth About Blayds—Belasco—W. 44 St.

The Warrior's Husband—Morosco—W. 45 St.

Too True to be Good—Guild—52 St. W. of B'way.

Whistling in the Dark—Ethel Barrymore—47 St. W. of B'way.

Drama

A Political Melodrama

SEVEN or eight years ago, when I first began to write dramatic criticism for *The Nation*, the various minor theaters were making very important contributions to every theatrical year. In a single season we had, for example, "A Man's Man" at the Fifty-second Street, "The Dybbuk" at the Neighborhood, "The Dream Play" at the Provincetown, and "The Great God Brown" at the Greenwich Village. At least three of these plays were among the most important of the year, and we had come to depend upon the little playhouses for intelligent performances of unusual plays. Then, for some reason or other, they began one by one to close their doors, until today only the Provincetown comes even intermittently to life; and even it does not generally afford any particular cause for rejoicing when it lights the tiny stage where "The Emperor Jones" and "The Hairy Ape" had their world premières. I take this to mean that the commercial theater has absorbed what that one generation of insurgents had to teach, and that no new group has arisen to take the place of the vigorous iconoclasts who finally succeeded in making room for themselves on Broadway. In any event the one fact is clear: within a period of about five years the little theaters of New York have declined from an almost dominating position to complete insignificance.

These reflections are suggested by the mildly encouraging fact that in "Merry-Go-Round" the Provincetown Theater has, for the first time in several years, a play good enough to justify a trip to MacDougal Street. I will not pretend that this political melodrama is to be mentioned in the same breath with some of the plays which graced that playhouse in its heyday, but despite its obviousness and its crudity "Merry-Go-Round" has a certain force, and that is more than could be said for any of the rather pathetically incompetent dramas which have recently been exhibited for very brief periods in this theater. It is exciting enough to hold its audience and it is coherent enough to convey its muckraking lesson. One stays to the end, and one knows, at least, what one was asked to stay for.

Though the technique of "Merry-Go-Round" is mildly expressionistic, the story is simple enough. Scenes change with cinematographic rapidity and between them one is treated to items of news projected as a moving band across the proscenium; but the story of politicians and gangsters is both straightforward and sufficiently familiar in every respect except, perhaps, in its unrelieved insistence that everything is about as bad as it could possibly be. Several references to New York as of a distant city give the requisite legal warning that Mayor Manning is not Mayor Walker and that Stransky is not Rothstein. Nevertheless, the authors will probably not be too much distressed if a certain similarity is observed in the outward incidents, and if the investigation which hangs over their politicians reminds the audience of that at present being conducted by Mr. Seabury. In any event, the play tells how the police found it necessary to convict someone of the crime committed by a gangster whom they dared not punish, and how they finally hit upon a helpless bell-boy who happened to be present in the hotel room when Stransky was shot. Many of the scenes—especially that of the inevitable third degree—are managed with considerable skill, and if the incidents seem extravagant, one may nevertheless reasonably doubt whether the imagination of any playwright could conceive anything worse than what has probably gone on in some American cities.

The hitherto unknown authors, Albert Maltz and George

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Sklar, wisely refrain from indicating their own political creed. They stick to the task of exposing the corruption of contemporary politics and of making their exposé interesting. Nor can it be denied that they are reasonably successful in doing both. I was excited and I was angry. That, I take it, was all the authors expected.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

Films

Formula

AMERICAN mass taste, according to the movies, demands violent action with a tender and virtuous denouement, performed by hard-boiled characters who are soft at the center. Americans, it seems, have not the courage of their wisecracks. They must be reassured each night before they go to sleep that romance and innocence are still the guiding beacons of the Republic, that everyone is honest at heart, and no man respects a girl who lets him get familiar before he gives her a diamond ring.

"The Mouthpiece" (Winter Garden Theater) out-formulas formula, though it does have a slightly new angle in that its principal character is a criminal lawyer whose large and lucrative practice consists of keeping criminals off the "hot-seat" and out of jail altogether by spectacular but perfectly legal means. All goes cynically and swiftly until the lawyer meets the irresistible force of movie innocence in the person of a new stenographer from Kentucky. From here on, the formula is followed so literally that the film defeats its own box-office purpose, for, in the words of *Variety*, "that a hard-boiled legal fixer entirely surrounded by flaming blondes should go to pieces over a tepid, mousey country girl . . . isn't so reasonable."

Yet despite the fact that credibility is suspended every time the Southern innocence of Miss Sidney Fox (last turned on in "Strictly Dishonorable") comes into play, "The Mouthpiece" is vigorous and entertaining, first, because of Warren William's convincing performance; second, because of Aline MacMahon's excellent work as the worldly-wise, efficient secretary-manager to whom her boss is not a hero but nevertheless lovable; and, third, because Hollywood has learned the technique of urban gangster pictures so well that they are always convincing in details of character, setting, and dialogue, if not in plot. The courtroom scenes in "The Mouthpiece" are extremely well handled, as are the minor criminal characters; and one of the most telling incidents is also profound. The boy, who is a bank messenger, is beaten and robbed. To the lawyer, to whom he comes for help, he tells a shaken and contradictory story. The spectator, at least, is convinced that the boy is guilty of the robbery. When finally it becomes evident that he is not guilty, the lawyer's remark that the trouble with innocent people is that their stories never hang together carries disturbing conviction as well as cynical humor.

Since Roland Young and Charlie Ruggles, separately and together, can make almost any line or situation amusing, "This Is the Night" (Paramount Theater) is worth seeing for all its clumsy, labored sequences and its unsuccessful attempts to imitate the comic touches of Lubitsch and the rhythmic gaiety of René Clair. "But the Flesh Is Weak" (Capitol Theater) forces Robert Montgomery into some humiliating attitudes and antics. Nevertheless, it has engaging and sustained lightness, a consistent and compact plot, and a leading lady, Miss Nora Gregor, who is charming in a quiet and believable way that will probably not get her very far with the audience for whom films are mainly manufactured.

MARGARET MARSHALL

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FOR RENT—APARTMENTS

WILL sublet (June 15 to Sept. 15) four room, well furnished apartment; piano, radio, frigidair, elevator, situated between Columbia and City College. Apt. 67-A, 49 St. Nicholas Terrace, New York City.

JUNE 1 to OCTOBER 1—The coolest apartment in Greenwich Village. Entire floor of private house, charmingly furnished. Cross ventilation. Overlooks gardens. Two fireplaces, complete kitchen. Convenient to subway. $75 monthly. Call Walker 5-4252.

SUBLET; June 1—October 1, lease; Bleecker Gardens. Top floor apartment; large living room, 2 bedrooms, kitchen, bath; 2 fireplaces; roof playground; overlooking garden with garden privileges. Unusually attractive. Moderate rent. Van Doren, 393 Bleecker St.

FOR RENT—for fourteen months, from July 1, 1932, to September 1, 1933, or the major part of that time; furnished or unfurnished; six or seven room duplex apartment, two baths, large community garden, roof playground; convenient downtown neighborhood. Mechanical refrigeration. Moderate rent. Box 628, c/o *The Nation.*

TWO rooms, Electrolux kitchen, charming old world apartment, unusually furnished, sixteen foot ceilings, living room 22x26; cool, quiet; all transportation facilities at door. June to October. References. Gramercy 7-4627.

JUNE 1st to OCT. 1st. Sublet, very attractively furnished 2 room apartment, bath, kitchenette. Light, airy, quiet. Well run house. Very reasonable. References. 112 E. 31st St. Near subway. Phone Lexington 2-8588.

WILL sublet (June 15 to Sept. 15) 5 room furnished apartment; radio, piano, frigidaire, elevator, children's playground. Tudor City. Murray Hill 4-0693.

ATTRACTIVE apartment (furnished), 9th floor, 4 exposures, view and sunshine, spacious studio living room, fireplace, 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, kitchen. Rent very reasonable. John Ross Mendenhall, 123 Waverly Place., N. Y. Spring 7-5479.

STUDIO rooms, attractively furnished; unfurnished. Also 2 or 3 room apartment. Suitable artistic work and living. Club atmosphere. Cultural environment. Lectures and musicals every evening. 321 W. 103rd St., Riverside. Next to Roerich Museum.

WHOLE floor, studio, large living room, 2 bedrooms, kitchen, bath. Terrace. Northern and Southern exposure. Furnished, or partly furnished. Possession immediately until Oct. 1st. 3 entrances; 2 flights up. Reasonable. Watkins 9-6733.

CHILDREN—SUMMER

LILLIPUT

A healthy, happy, homelike camp for 4 to 11 year olds.

A lovely house, ideal surroundings, in the mountains, very accessible. The entire staff is experienced in the guidance of small children. Resident physician, trained nurse. Highly endorsed by educators and parents. Group of 40. Booklet. RAymond 9-4145. Anne Josephson, 1880 University Ave., N. Y.

FAMILY with two children (boy 10, girl 7) having spacious summer home on a lake (fifty miles from New York) would take in board two children, similarly aged, during vacation term. Ideal surroundings, reasonable. Write MS, Room 200, 10 East 43rd St., New York City.

A FEW children from 2 years up can be accommodated in private country home with every modern convenience. Expert care with properly balanced diet and home atmosphere. References exchanged. Reply Box 636, c/o *The Nation.*

BOARDING PLACE WANTED

WOULD like to get in touch with family, children 10-12, interested boarding 11 year old girl, June, July, August, country or seashore. Progressive education atmosphere. Be. Pasquale, 38 Perry St., Tel. WAtkins 9-1670.

RESTAURANT

A MIDTOWN DINING PLACE

ROSE BARISH RESTAURANT

44 West 47th Street

between 5th and 6th Aves.

Breakfast Dinner

Luncheon Seventy-five cents

?

A Summer House?
A Place for the Children?

State your wants in a small classified advertisement in *The Nation.* (Gets results.)

"I believe you would like to know that through a classified advertisement in THE NATION I rented my furnished apartment for the summer to most reliable people.

It is a great satisfaction to use a medium which eliminates a large class of undesirables and focuses the attention of the NATION-reader type."

Minimum 30 words, $3.08. Additional lines of 6 words, 62 cents.

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